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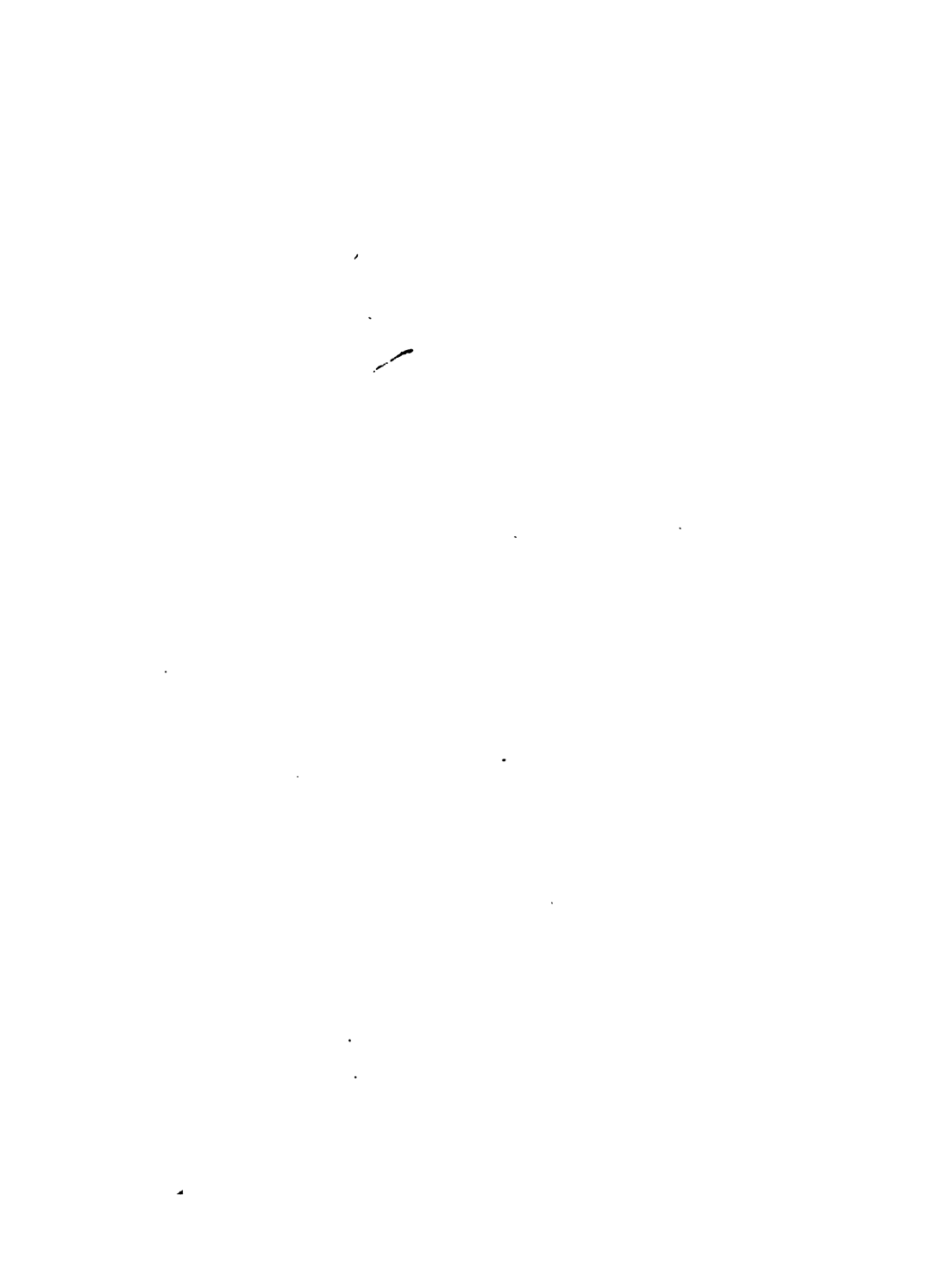
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## **VIRGIL'S MESSIANIC ECLOGUE**



3

# **VIRGIL'S MESSIANIC ECLOGUE**

**ITS MEANING, OCCASION, & SOURCES**

**THREE STUDIES**

**BY**

**JOSEPH B. MAYOR  
W. WARDE FOWLER  
R. S. CONWAY**

**WITH THE TEXT OF THE ECLOGUE,  
AND A VERSE TRANSLATION**

**BY**

**R. S. CONWAY**

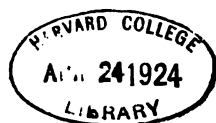
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## PREFACE

OF the three Essays which follow, that by Mr W. Warde Fowler appeared in the *Harvard Classical Studies* for 1903 (vol. xiv.), that by Professor Conway in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1907, that by myself in the *Expositor* for April 1907. They were written without reference to one another, the last indeed without any knowledge of the existence of the other two. This makes it all the more remarkable that they should fit so well into the scheme already provided for them in the first written Essay, where Mr Warde Fowler distinguishes three main questions arising out of the study of the poem. (1) What was Virgil's purpose in writing it and in connecting it with the consulship of Pollio? (2) Who or what was the child whose birth it celebrates?

(3) Whence did Virgil draw the very peculiar ideas and imagery of the poem? The first question, expanded here into an enquiry as to the Messianic ideas which are to be found in Virgil's writings generally, is that to which Professor Conway has devoted his attention; while Mr Warde Fowler is chiefly occupied with the second question, Who or what was the child? and I have myself treated of the third question in a paper which was originally entitled, "Virgil and Isaiah: an Enquiry into the Sources of the Fourth Eclogue." Such being the relation of the Essays to each other, it was thought that they would be more interesting and more effective if combined in one volume, than if they were left stranded in separate periodicals which might not always be easily accessible. Each Essay has undergone a certain amount of revision, as the result of mutual discussion, which has brought us closer together on some points; but, speaking generally, it is surprising how little alteration was needed to fit each separate Essay for taking its place as a part of a new whole. It will, of course,

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be understood that each writer still remains responsible only for his own Essay.

Professor Conway's verse translation was completed by him at the request of the other two writers, and I, as the senior member in our partnership, have been similarly asked to write and sign this prefatory explanation of our common purpose.

I have only to add the expression of our thanks to the Editors of the different periodicals, in which the papers first appeared, for consenting to their republication in the present form.

JOSEPH B. MAYOR.

*P.S.*—Since the above was written, two papers dealing with the same subject have been published by Professor W. M. Ramsay in the *Expositor* for June and August. In these he strongly supports Professor Conway's argument as to the spread of Messianic ideas in Italy during the latter half of the first century, B.C., and also agrees with me in tracing these

ideas to a Jewish source, which he has no hesitation in identifying with the prophecies of Isaiah himself. On the other hand, he entirely repudiates the opinion accepted in these Essays, and apparently now in favour with most foreign as well as English scholars, that the object of the poem was to celebrate the birth of the looked-for child of Octavianus and Scribonia.

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# VIRGIL'S FOURTH ECLOGUE

## WITH A VERSE TRANSLATION

THE following rendering is mainly the work of Professor Conway, but he is deeply indebted to the criticisms and suggestions of his colleagues, and even more to his former pupil, Miss F. E. Bevan, Headmistress of the South Liverpool School for Girls, who generously put into his hands a draft version in the same metre, from which were taken l. 26, most of ll. 75-79, and not a few other words and phrases, especially in the Childhood passage.

# P. VERGILI MARONIS

## ECLOGA IV

Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus.  
Non omnes arbusta iuvant humilesque myricaë ;  
si canimus siluas, siluæ sint consule dignæ.

- Ultima Cumæi uenit iam carminis ætas ;  
5 magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.  
Iam redit et uirgo, redeunt Saturnia regna ;  
iam noua progenies cælo demittitur alto.  
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum  
desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,  
10 casta faue Lucina : tuus iam regnat Apollo.  
Teque adeo decus hoc æui, te consule inibit,  
Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses ;  
te duce, si qua manent sceleris uestigia nostri,  
inrita perpetua spluent formidine terras.  
15 Ille deum uitam accipiet diuisque uidebit  
permixtos heroas, et ipse uidebitur illis,  
pacatumque reget patriis uirtutibus orbem.

## TRANSLATION

Muses to whom Sicilian shepherds sang,  
Teach me a loftier strain. The hazel copse  
And lowly tamarisk will not always please.  
If still the wild, free woodland note be heard,  
Our woodland song must suit a consul's ear.

5

Lo, the last age of Cumæ's seer has come !  
5 (Again the great millennial æon dawns.  
Once more the hallowed Maid appears, once more  
Kind Saturn reigns, and from high heaven descends  
The firstborn child<sup>1</sup> of promise.) Do but thou, 10  
Pure Goddess, by whose grace on infant eyes  
Daylight first breaks, smile softly on this babe ;  
(The age of iron in his time shall cease  
And golden generations fill the world.)  
E'en now thy brother, Lord of Light and Healing, 15  
10 Apollo, rules and ends the older day.

Thy office, Polljo, thine, shall mark the year  
Wherein this star begins his glorious course.  
Under thy banner all the stains of ill,  
That shame us yet, shall melt away and break 20  
The long, long night of universal dread.  
15 For the child's birthright is the life of gods,  
Heroes and gods together he shall know,  
And rule a world his sire has blessed with peace.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nova progenies* denotes the expected child who is  
to be the first of the new and better generation.

At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu  
 errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus  
 20 mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet aëantho.  
 Ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae  
 ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones.  
 Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cunabula flores;  
 occidet et serpens, et fallax herba ueneni  
 25 occidet; Assyrium uolgo nascetur amomum.

At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis  
 iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere uirtus,  
 molli paulatim flauescet campus arista,  
 incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uua,  
 30 et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella.  
 Pauca tamen suberunt priscae uestigia fraudis,  
 quae temptare Thetim ratibus, quae cingere  
 muris  
 oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos.  
 Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quae uehat  
 Argo  
 35 delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella,  
 atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles

## TRANSLATION

5

- For thee, fair Child, the lavish Earth shall  
spread 25  
Thy earliest playthings, trailing ivy-wreaths  
And foxgloves red and cups of water-lilies,  
20 And wild acanthus leaves with sunshine stored.  
The goats shall come uncalled, weighed down with  
milk,  
Nor lions' roar affright the labouring kine. 30  
Thy very cradle, blossoming for joy,  
Shall with soft buds caress thy baby face ;  
The treacherous snake and deadly herb shall  
die,  
25 And Syrian spikenard blow on every bank.
- But when thy boyish eyes begin to read 35  
Rome's ancient prowess and thy sire's great story,  
Gaining the power to know what manhood is,  
Then, league by league, the plain without a  
sower  
Shall ripen into waves of yellow corn ;  
On every wild-thorn purple grapes shall cluster, 40  
30 And stubborn oaks yield honey clear as dew.  
But in men's hearts some lingering seed of ill  
E'en yet shall bid them launch adventurous keels,  
And brave the inviolate-sea, and wall their towns,  
And cut earth's face with furrows. Then behold 45  
Another Tiphys take the helm and steer  
Another Argo, manned by chosen souls  
(Seeking the golden, undiscovered East)  
35 New wars shall rise, and Troy renewed shall see  
Another great Achilles leap to land. 50

ECLOGA IV

6  
Tandem  
Hinc, ubi iam firmata uirum te fecerit aetas,  
cedet et ipse mari uector, nec nautica pinus  
mutabit merces : omnis feret omnia tellus.

- 40 Non rastros patietur humus, non uinea falcem ;  
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga soluet arator ;  
nec uarios discet mentiri lana colores,  
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suaue rubenti  
murice, iam croceo mutabit uellera luto ;  
45 sponte sua sandyx pascentes uestiet agnos.  
'Talia saecula' suis dixerunt 'currite' fuis  
concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.

- Aggredere o magnos, aderit iam tempus, honores,  
, cara deum suboles, magnum Iouis incrementum.  
50 Aspice conuexo nutantem pondere mundum,  
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque pro-  
fundum ;  
aspice, uenturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo.  
O mihi tam longae maneat pars ultima uitae  
spiritus et, quantum sat erit tua dicere facta,  
55 non me carminibus uincat nec Thracius Orpheus,  
nec Linus, huic mater quamuis atque huic pater  
adsit,  
Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo.  
Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si iudice certet,  
Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice uictum.

At last, when stronger years have made thee  
man,

- The voyager will cease to vex the sea  
Nor ships of pinewood longer serve in traffic,  
For every fruit shall grow in every land.  
40 The field shall thrive unharrowed, vines unpruned, 55  
And stalwart ploughmen leave their oxen free.  
Wool shall not learn the dyer's cozening art,  
But in the meadow, on the ram's own back,  
Nature shall give new colours to the fleece,  
Soft blushing glow of crimson, gold of crocus, 60  
45 And lambs be clothed in scarlet as they feed.  
"Run, run, ye spindles! On to this fulfilment  
Speed the world's fortune, draw the living thread."  
So heaven's unshaken ordinance declaring  
The Sister Fates enthroned together sang. 65

- Come then, dear child of gods, Jove's mighty heir,  
Begin thy high career; the hour is sounding.  
50 See how it shakes the vaulted firmament,  
Earth and the spreading seas and depth of sky!  
See, in the dawning of a new creation 70  
The heart of all things living throbs with joy!  
Oh, if but life would bring me days enough  
55 And breath not all too scant to sing thy deeds,  
Not Thracian Orpheus should outdo the strain,  
Nor Linus, though his mother aid the one, 75  
His sire the other, sweet Calliope  
And beautiful Apollo, Lord of Song.  
Nay, even Pan, his own Arcadia judging,  
Should, by Arcadia's judgment, own defeat.



- 60 Incipe, parue puer, risu cognoscere matrem ;  
 matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.  
 Incipe, parue puer : cui non risere parentes,  
 nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

~~Not a Quot - Quot in his Quot a Quot~~

*Note.*—*Cui non risere parentes.* In spite of Mr Warde Fowler's weighty plea (p. 71) for Quintilian's reading *qui non risere parentes*, I still feel that the balance of authority, in the MSS., in Servius and Nonius, is on the side of the traditional text; and I prefer its *hunc* even to Dr Postgate's *hinc*. Quintilian took his reading to mean "Si quis infans parentibus non adridet." But is it not less difficult to believe in the accidental corruption of C to Q in Quintilian's copy, than to ascribe to Virgil, in the climax of such a poem, three such bewildering lapses into everyday diction as (1) the transitive use of *ridere*; (2) the meaning "smile upon" instead of "deride"; and (3) the change (on which Quintilian comments) from the plural *qui* to the singular *hunc*? Such solecisms as (2) and (3) occur, of course, in conversation and ~~careless~~ writing, as Quintilian and Scaliger knew; but I am not yet persuaded to find them in Virgil.

The conjecture *qui non risere parenti* removes only one of the difficulties and supposes a larger corruption in Quintilian than the MS. reading of our passage implies in Quintilian's text of Virgil.

The translation I have adopted gives the essential

60 Come, child, and greet thy mother with a  
smile! 80

Ten weary waiting months her love has known.  
Come little Child! Whoso is born in sorrow  
Jove ne'er hath bidden join the immortal banquet,  
Nor deathless Hebe deigned to be his bride.

meaning which is common to all the three readings.

On the precise meaning of the last line see Mr Warde Fowler's discussion on p. 74, and my note on p. 21. But it is best to add here the alternative rendering which Mr Warde Fowler suggests for the last four lines.

**R. S. C.**

Where is thy first sweet smile, my babe, to give  
Thy mother joy, long months of suffering past?  
Where is the smile, my little one? Ah there!  
Who greets not so his mother must not seek  
From guardian god or goddess, board or bride.

The ...  
said ...  
...  
...  
Chandrasekhar  
B



## THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN VIRGIL

R. S. CONWAY

*Professor of Latin in the University of Manchester*

FEW things are more characteristic of the spirit of modern criticism than the complete decay of the reverence with which Virgil's Fourth Eclogue was once regarded. That beautiful, playful, mysterious poem celebrated the expected birth of a child, by declaring it to mark the advent of a new Golden Age. For fourteen centuries this declaration was interpreted in only one way. From the first establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire, down to the days of Pope and Johnson, the title of this Essay would have been at once understood to refer to the Fourth Eclogue, and no one would have thought it natural to connect it with any other part of the poet's writings. Some scholars, indeed, might state more carefully than others the

degree of consciousness of the meaning of the Eclogue which they attributed to its author ; but that the poem was an inspired prediction of the Christian Messiah seemed both clear and good to every Christian eye. Modern commentators, however, protest with one voice that the child—if it existed at all—was some Roman infant of Virgil's own day, and they lament over a belief which one of the most judicious of them describes, with quite theological warmth, "the ridiculous, and if it were not sincere, I might have said blasphemous, notion that the Eclogue contained an inspired Messianic prophecy."

We find, then, the critics of a particular epoch, though by no means clear as to what the poem does mean, at least confident in declaring that all their predecessors were wrong ; and they do not pause even to exempt from their censure the greatest student ever drawn to Virgil's poetry—so that a living and distinguished Oxford scholar accuses Dante of "ridiculous" if not "blasphemous" conduct. Under these distressing circumstances it may seem worth while to look into the poem for ourselves, to separate its central idea from the rest, and to ask what place that

idea holds in other parts of Virgil's writings. For it can hardly, I think, be denied, that in both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* we continually meet with a conception which in many ways is parallel to the Jewish expectation of a Messiah; that is to say, the conception of a national hero and ruler, divinely inspired, and sent to deliver not his own nation only, but mankind, raising them to a new and ethically higher existence. So far as I know, no attempt has been made to examine this question in the light of our present knowledge of Virgil.

The Fourth Eclogue is addressed to the Consul Pollio—at least if we are content, as honest persons<sup>1</sup> must be, to accept the reading of l. 12 which is given by all the manuscripts. Gaius Asinius Pollio, soldier, statesman, and poet, was a distinguished member of the Cæsarian party, in whose consulship, towards the end of the year 40 B.C.,

<sup>1</sup> The desperate emendation of Schaper, who (in the leading edition for schools in Germany) changes *Pollio* into *orbis* without the faintest critical warrant, has the beautiful (though unnoticed) result of making Lucina a consul; for she is the only person to whom *te consule* in l. 11 could then possibly refer, as the reader may see from the quotations below.

- At tibi prima, puer, nullo munuscula cultu  
errantes hederas passim cum baccare tellus  
20 mixtaque ridenti colocasia fundet acantho.  
Ipsae lacte domum referent distenta capellae  
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones.  
Ipsa tibi blandos fundent cubabula flores;  
occidet et serpens, et fallax herba ueneni  
25 occidet; Assyrium uolgo nascetur amomum.

- At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis  
iam legere et quae sit poteris cognoscere uirtus,  
molli paulatim flauescet campus arista,  
incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uua,  
30 et durae quercus sudabunt roscidâ mella.  
Pauca tamen suberunt priscae uestigia fraudis,  
quae temptare Thetim ratibus, quae cingere  
muris  
oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos.  
Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quae uehat  
Argo  
35 delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella,  
atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles

- For thee, fair Child, the lavish Earth shall  
spread 25  
Thy earliest playthings, trailing ivy-wreaths  
And foxgloves red and cups of water-lilies,  
20 And wild acanthus leaves with sunshine stored.  
The goats shall come uncalled, weighed down with  
milk,  
Nor lions' roar affright the labouring kine. 30  
Thy very cradle, blossoming for joy,  
Shall with soft buds caress thy baby face ;  
The treacherous snake and deadly herb shall  
die,  
25 And Syrian spikenard blow on every bank.
- But when thy boyish eyes begin to read 35  
Rome's ancient prowess and thy sire's great story,  
Gaining the power to know what manhood is,  
Then, league by league, the plain without a  
sower  
Shall ripen into waves of yellow corn ;  
On every wild-thorn purple grapes shall cluster, 40  
30 And stubborn oaks yield honey clear as dew.  
But in men's hearts some lingering seed of ill  
E'en yet shall bid them launch adventurous keels,  
And brave the inviolate-sea, and wall their towns,  
And cut earth's face with furrows. Then behold 45  
Another Tiphys take the helm and steer  
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6  
P  
ECLOGA IV

Hinc, ubi iam firmata uirum te fecerit aetas,  
cedet et ipse mari uector, nec nautica pinus  
mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus.

40 Non rastros patietur humus, non uinea falcem;  
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga soluet arator;  
nec uarios discet mentiri lana colores,  
ipse sed in pratis aries iam suaue rubenti  
murice, iam croceo mutabit uellera luto;

45 sponte sua sandyx pascentes uestiet agnos.  
'Talia saecula' suis dixerunt 'currite' fuis  
concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.

Aggredere o magnos, aderit iam tempus, honores,  
cara deum suboles, magnum Iouis incrementum.

50 Aspice conuexo nutantem pondere mundum,  
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque pro-  
fundum;

aspice, uenturo laetantur ut omnia saeclo.

O mihi tam longae maneat pars ultima uitae  
spiritus et, quantum sat erit tua dicere facta,

55 non me carminibus uincat nec Thracius Orpheus,  
nec Linus, huic mater quamuis atque huic pater  
adsit,

Orphei Calliopea, Lino formosus Apollo.

Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si iudice certet,

Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice uictum.

At last, when stronger years have made thee  
man,

- The voyager will cease to vex the sea  
Nor ships of pinewood longer serve in traffic,  
For every fruit shall grow in every land.  
40 The field shall thrive unharrowed, vines unpruned, 55  
And stalwart ploughmen leave their oxen free.  
Wool shall not learn the dyer's cozening art,  
But in the meadow, on the ram's own back,  
Nature shall give new colours to the fleece,  
Soft blushing glow of crimson, gold of crocus, 60  
45 And lambs be clothed in scarlet as they feed.  
"Run, run, ye spindles! On to this fulfilment  
Speed the world's fortune, draw the living thread."  
So heaven's unshaken ordinance declaring  
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Begin thy high career; the hour is sounding.  
50 See how it shakes the vaulted firmament,  
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See, in the dawning of a new creation 70  
The heart of all things living throbs with joy!  
Oh, if but life would bring me days enough  
55 And breath not all too scant to sing thy deeds,  
Not Thracian Orpheus should outdo the strain,  
Nor Linus, though his mother aid the one, 75  
His sire the other, sweet Calliope  
And beautiful Apollo, Lord of Song.  
Nay, even Pan, his own Arcadia judging,  
Should, by Arcadia's judgment, own defeat.

- 60 Incipe, parue puer, risu cognoscere matrem ;  
 matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.  
 Incipe, parue puer : cui non risere parentes,  
 nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

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*Note.*—*Cui non risere parentes.* In spite of Mr Warde Fowler's weighty plea (p. 71) for Quintilian's reading *qui non risere parentes*, I still feel that the balance of authority, in the MSS., in Servius and Nonius, is on the side of the traditional text; and I prefer its *hunc* even to Dr Postgate's *hinc*. Quintilian took his reading to mean "Si quis infans parentibus non adridet." But is it not less difficult to believe in the accidental corruption of C to Q in Quintilian's copy, than to ascribe to Virgil, in the climax of such a poem, three such bewildering lapses into everyday diction as (1) the transitive use of *ridere*; (2) the meaning "smile upon" instead of "deride"; and (3) the change (on which Quintilian comments) from the plural *qui* to the singular *hunc*? Such solecisms as (2) and (3) occur, of course, in conversation and careless writing, as Quintilian and Scaliger knew; but I am not yet persuaded to find them in Virgil.

The conjecture *qui non risere parenti* removes only one of the difficulties and supposes a larger corruption in Quintilian than the MS. reading of our passage implies in Quintilian's text of Virgil.

The translation I have adopted gives the essential

60 Come, child, and greet thy mother with a  
smile! 80

Ten weary waiting months her love has known.  
Come little Child! Whoso is born in sorrow  
Jove ne'er hath bidden join the immortal banquet,  
Nor deathless Hebe deigned to be his bride.

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meaning which is common to all the three readings.

On the precise meaning of the last line see Mr Warde Fowler's discussion on p. 74, and my note on p. 21. But it is best to add here the alternative rendering which Mr Warde Fowler suggests for the last four lines.

R. S. C.

Where is thy first sweet smile, my babe, to give  
Thy mother joy, long months of suffering past?  
Where is the smile, my little one? Ah there!  
Who greets not so his mother must not seek  
From guardian god or goddess, board or bride.

*The poet's word on  
said addition on  
which is a smile  
and a smile is a  
smile. B. C. 1914*



## THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN VIRGIL

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FEW things are more characteristic of the spirit of modern criticism than the complete decay of the reverence with which Virgil's Fourth Eclogue was once regarded. That beautiful, playful, mysterious poem celebrated the expected birth of a child, by declaring it to mark the advent of a new Golden Age. For fourteen centuries this declaration was interpreted in only one way. From the first establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire, down to the days of Pope and Johnson, the title of this Essay would have been at once understood to refer to the Fourth Eclogue, and no one would have thought it natural to connect it with any other part of the poet's writings. Some scholars, indeed, might state more carefully than others the

degree of consciousness of the meaning of the Eclogue which they attributed to its author ; but that the poem was an inspired prediction of the Christian Messiah seemed both clear and good to every Christian eye. Modern commentators, however, protest with one voice that the child—if it existed at all—was some Roman infant of Virgil's own day, and they lament over a belief which one of the most judicious of them describes, with quite theological warmth, "the ridiculous, and if it were not sincere, I might have said blasphemous, notion that the Eclogue contained an inspired Messianic prophecy."

We find, then, the critics of a particular epoch, though by no means clear as to what the poem does mean, at least confident in declaring that all their predecessors were wrong ; and they do not pause even to exempt from their censure the greatest student ever drawn to Virgil's poetry—so that a living and distinguished Oxford scholar accuses Dante of "ridiculous" if not "blasphemous" conduct. Under these distressing circumstances it may seem worth while to look into the poem for ourselves, to separate its central idea from the rest, and to ask what place that

idea holds in other parts of Virgil's writings. For it can hardly, I think, be denied, that in both the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid* we continually meet with a conception which in many ways is parallel to the Jewish expectation of a Messiah; that is to say, the conception of a national hero and ruler, divinely inspired, and sent to deliver not his own nation only, but mankind, raising them to a new and ethically higher existence. So far as I know, no attempt has been made to examine this question in the light of our present knowledge of Virgil.

The Fourth Eclogue is addressed to the Consul Pollio—at least if we are content, as honest persons<sup>1</sup> must be, to accept the reading of l. 12 which is given by all the manuscripts. Gaius Asinius Pollio, soldier, statesman, and poet, was a distinguished member of the Cæsarian party, in whose consulship, towards the end of the year 40 B.C.,

<sup>1</sup> The desperate emendation of Schaper, who (in the leading edition for schools in Germany) changes *Pollio* into *orbis* without the faintest critical warrant, has the beautiful (though unnoticed) result of making Lucina a consul; for she is the only person to whom *te consule* in l. 11 could then possibly refer, as the reader may see from the quotations below.



was expected the birth of the child which is the subject of the poem. Of the position of Roman affairs at that time we must take some note later on ; here let us simply observe that Pollio was one of the friends to whom, a year sooner, Virgil owed the restoration of his father's farm, which for a time had been handed over to one of the countless "veterans" of Octavian's army "settled" on other men's lands. After invoking the muses of pastoral poetry to help him in higher strains than heretofore, Virgil turns at once to his double theme, the return of the Golden Age, and the birth of a particular child. Through a not uncommon feature of language<sup>1</sup> the only

<sup>1</sup> Based on what I suppose may be regarded as an almost universal human feeling, at all events in the ancient world, and by no means extinct ; witness a playful passage (which it grieves me to mutilate) from one of the most delightful chapters of Mr De Morgan's *Joseph Vance* (London, 1906, p. 288) :

"And then I sit and think of that dear wife of mine that I lost a quarter of a century ago—I think of the happy weeks we passed after our happy wedding, in the summer of '64, chiefly at old French towns, on the coast or inland ; of happy wanderings on the endless sands. . . . And as something always stands out clear, the most vivid thing of all is one particular rosy fat fishwife, and the sweet candour with which she asked when Janey expected her *fil's*. No such party was in

Latin word for "child" is one that is masculine in form, namely *puer*; and hence it is natural, indeed almost inevitable, that the poet should write as if it were certain that the child would be a boy. And it is well to notice now that the lines which invoke Lucina, the Goddess of Birth, and the concluding prayer that the mother's weary months of waiting may be happily ended, make it quite certain (to every reader, at least, whose sense of humour is not somewhat in abeyance) that it is not of some mystical moral emblem, but of an actual mother and child, that we are meant to think.

One of the sacred books of the Roman state-religion was a selection of rhymes and rubrics attributed to an ancient Wise

sight, but Marie Favre, or whatever her name was, took him for granted, sex and all——"

To Virgil it would have seemed a discourtesy to the parents, and more an ill omen, to speak as if there was any doubt of the sex of the child to be; and it was clearly essential to the whole scheme of a poem which linked a great reformation of humanity to the personality of the child, that the poet should "take for granted," the sex of his Prince of peace.

I cannot help hoping that these considerations may do something to modify Prof. Ramsay's strange but reiterated belief (see p. 58) that "a poet could not work under such conditions," *i.e.*, before the child was born.

Woman or Sibyl, though the official book of Virgil's day had in fact been compiled no earlier than 82 B.C., after a more ancient document had been burnt in the Sullan tumults. According to tradition, this Sibyl lived at Cumæ; one of the "Sibylline" rhymes seems to have improved on the familiar doctrine<sup>1</sup> of the four ages of the world—gold, silver, bronze, and iron—by declaring that the golden age, in which Saturn was king, and which ended when the Maiden Justitia (*Δίκη* or *Astraea*) left the earth, was soon to begin over again. The Roman astrologers, too, fired by the marvellous portent of the *Iulium sidus*, the comet which appeared soon after the murder of Julius Cæsar in 44 B.C., had been unusually busy; and, among other items of popular instruction, they had spread the belief that Cæsar's death had fallen in the "last month but one" of the "great year," or stellar cycle of the Etruscans, at the close of which the whole world was to begin its course anew. Such were some of the current con-

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 180. But the reader will find a full account of the Sibylline oracles and their sources in Dr Mayor's Essay.

ceptions that helped to mould the form of the prophecy<sup>1</sup> to which the reader's attention is now invited.

"Lo, the last age of Cumæ's seer has come :  
 Again the great millennial æon dawns.  
 Once more the hallowed Maid appears, once more  
 Kind Saturn reigns, and from high heaven descends  
 The first-born child of promise. Do but thou,  
 Pure Goddess, by whose grace on infant eyes  
 Daylight first breaks, smile softly on this babe ;  
 The age of iron in his time shall cease  
 And golden generations fill the world.  
 E'en now thy brother, Lord of Light and Healing,  
 Apollo, rules and ends the older day."

The lines thus roughly<sup>2</sup> rendered supplied, as we shall see, what may be called the kernel of the mediæval view of the poem.

The reference to Apollo is due to the Etruscan doctrine that the last period or "month" of the *magnus annus* was under his lordship ; and the same bright deity had been chosen by Augustus for his special protector.

Virgil then turns to the patron to whom the ode is offered, and from whose consul-

<sup>1</sup> Lines 4-10.

<sup>2</sup> And literally, except for the attempt to express the meaning which the proper names conveyed to the Latin reader.

ship the year of the child's birth will be dated :<sup>1</sup>—

“Thy office, Pollio, thine, shall mark the year  
Wherein this star begins his glorious course.  
Under thy banner, all the stains of ill,  
That shame us yet, shall melt away and break  
The long, long night of universal dread.”

The rest of the poem pictures three stages in the unfolding of the new era, corresponding to the childhood, youth, and manhood of the boy himself. Upon the infant, earth lavishes unwonted gifts; flowers spring untended, and such flowers as make the fairest contrasts, crimson foxgloves on a background of wandering ivy, the soft leaves of water-lilies,<sup>2</sup> and the glistening, pointed foliage of the acanthus. “The she-goats unbidden shall bring home their full udders, the cattle shall no longer fear great lions; . . . the serpent shall perish, poisonous plants shall perish too; the balm of Assyria shall grow by the wayside.”

The second stage comes when the child is “old enough to read of the prowess of ancient heroes and the great deeds of his

<sup>1</sup> Lines 11-14. The meaning of this “night of dread” will appear clearly later on.

<sup>2</sup> Such seems to be the meaning of *colocasia*.

father, and to learn what manly valour means." Nature will then double her bounty, and add corn, wine, and honey to the flowers, without human toil. But men will not yet have understood their new blessings; "there will still remain within them a few traces of their ancient evil" (*Pauca tamen suberunt priscae uestigia fraudis*) which will bid them seek adventures over sea, build city walls, and plough the fields as of old. Again a band of heroes shall sail, like the Argonauts, to seek treasure in the unknown East, "another Achilles shall attack another Troy." There cannot be a great leader of men, thought Virgil, with nothing to conquer, at least in his youth. The picture of the new age is not all fairyland. Men will still have enough "original sin" (so Augustine understands the phrase<sup>1</sup>) to lead them into bold adventure. Or—if we may leave the allegory for a moment—the new ruler of the Roman world still has realms to subdue; the Parthians<sup>2</sup> and Indians will give scope to his youthful ambition.

<sup>1</sup> *Civ. Dei*, 16, 27.

<sup>2</sup> The Parthians were in arms at the moment Virgil wrote, and Mark Antony had undertaken to conquer them; but afterwards he had found more congenial

But Virgil cannot stop there. His dream would be left incomplete if it ended with the shout of triumph. "When sturdy age has made the child a man," mankind will have learnt to accept earth's bounty, and to force her gifts no longer; the ground shall no longer suffer the harrow, nor the vineyard the pruning hook; the merchant shall no longer trouble the sea. Every man's needs shall be satisfied in his own land; instead of dyed stuffs from Tyre, there shall be rams with purple and saffron hair, and lambs with scarlet fleeces. And with these playful colours<sup>1</sup> the picture is complete. The imagery, indeed, covers a quite serious thought<sup>2</sup>—the contrast between the natural labour of the farmer and the frauds and cruelties of trade (at a time when every merchant ship had slaves for a part of her cargo). But its main purpose is to bring the reader back to the magical occupations. If his eye ever lighted on the poem, he no doubt interpreted the "new Achilles" as a compliment to himself; but I must confess that I find it very hard to think that Virgil even dreamt of intending this.

<sup>1</sup> Far less strange to an Italian eye than to ours, as every traveller knows.

<sup>2</sup> This is worked out later on in one of the noblest passages in the *Georgics* (ii. 496-531).

flowers beside the cradle, a cradle still waiting for its child. And so the poem closes with a greeting to the infant, rising to a higher note as the poet bids him enter upon a more than human course. Glories shall be his such as rewarded Hercules,<sup>1</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> In the last line of the Eclogue Mr Warde Fowler, following the Servian commentary, sees an allusion to the custom observed in noble Roman houses by which, when a child was born, a *mensa* was dedicated to Hercules and a *lectus* to Juno, as to the two presiding deities of wedlock. This suggestion notably enriches the meaning of the line, and I accept it very gladly on its positive side. But I cannot help feeling that here, as so often, Virgil transcends and glorifies the particular point of usage or myth which was the occasion of what he is writing; and that he definitely means to suggest for the young deliverer a career and a reward like that of Hercules, with whom Augustus himself is continually compared. "*If only he is born amid smiles (that is, safely and with good omens), honour from men and love of woman shall be his, but in far higher degree than even the guardian deities we now invoke are wont to bestow. Hercules shall be his dispensator, Juno his pronuba, but the board and the bride to which they call him shall be as glorious as those won by Hercules himself.*" I cannot quite feel with Mr Warde Fowler that the tone of the passage is "simple and unconventional," though it is certainly "real and tender." The "interwoven" order of *hunc* and *dignata*, distributed over the two clauses, is always, I think, a mark of serious and careful diction (see *Class. Rev.*, Oct. 1900, p. 357).

Such a double meaning as I suggest, will hardly, I think, seem strange to any lover of Virgil. But to those



toiling servant of mankind,—a seat at the table of the gods, a goddess for his bride. Only let the mother's prayers be speedily answered and her weariness crowned with a baby's smile.

But who is the child? Why is the poet so strangely reticent of the name of its father? Why, indeed, said the early Christian Church, but that he was speaking greater things than he dared give a name to; that he and the Sibyl he is quoting were inspired to predict the advent of the Christ. The earliest recorded attempt (so far as I can find) to interpret the poem in this sense was that of the Emperor Constantine the Great. His biographer, Eusebius, the contemporary historian and bishop, attributes to him a "Speech to the Assembly of the

to whom this feature of his style is unfamiliar, may be submitted as one case out of many, the *meliores animas*, the bull slain by Entellus in place of Dares whom he had spared (*Aen.* v., 483). This means, as Servius saw, not merely the *melior victima*, which custom demanded when an intended victim escaped, but also the non-human sacrifice which the poet's humanity knew to be "better" to the divine eye than the death of Dares. Further examples are given in my lecture published in *The Proceedings of the Classical Association for 1906 (Manchester Meeting)*.

Saints," which contains (cc. 19-21) an elaborate exposition of Virgil's Eclogue (Eusebius' record is, of course, in Greek). It is sincere and interesting, if not entirely edifying. The Emperor was very glad to connect his newly recognised<sup>1</sup> religion (313 A.D.) with the great traditions of the pagan empire. After quoting and expounding a "Sibylline" oracle (which is in part of Christian date<sup>2</sup>) on which he supposed Virgil's poem to be based, he proceeds from Virgil's opening prediction of a new generation and an unknown infant, and declares that the poet knew that he was writing of Christ, but wrapped the prophecy in an allegory in order to escape persecution. The chief figures of the poem are interpreted with somewhat appalling ingenuity. The *Virgo* is, of course, the Virgin Mary;<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> Here and in one or two other points of later history I owe some not unimportant corrections to the learning and kindness of my colleague, Professor T. F. Tout.

<sup>2</sup> See on this Dr Mayor's Essay, pp. 98, 131.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek rendering given for *Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna* is "Ἦκει παρθένος αἰθρῆς ἀγούσ' ἐπὰρδὸν βασιλῆα, the latter half of which at first sight reads like a deliberate falsification. But a glance at the description of Saturn's descent to reign on earth given in *Aen.* viii. 319-321 (cf. p. 124 below) will, I think, be enough to

"lions," who are no longer to be feared, are the persecutors of the Church; the serpent who shall perish is the serpent who betrayed Eve! The imperial commentator felt no hesitations; and he has at least given us an excellent example of the way in which poetry should not be interpreted. One may be thankful that he has not laid hands on the saffron-coloured rams.)

From Constantine and Eusebius we turn with relief to more thoughtful readers of Virgil. Augustine is never tired of quoting him,<sup>1</sup> and regards him with unbroken veneration, but ascribes<sup>2</sup> the actual prophecy of Christ in this Eclogue only to the Sibyl, and supposes that Virgil himself had no knowledge of the person to whom the prediction referred. He even acknowledges<sup>3</sup> that he would have been unwilling to believe that

defend the translator from the suspicion of conscious fraud. The knots of the last two lines were all cut by putting only a comma at *puer* and a full stop at *parentes*!

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, the lemma *Vergilius* in any index to the *Civitas Dei*.

<sup>2</sup> *Civ. Dei*, x. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata Expositio*, lib. i. c. 3. "Fuerunt enim et prophetae non ipsius (dei) in quibus etiam aliqua inueniuntur quae de Christo audita cecinerunt, sicut etiam de Sibylla dicitur: quod non

the Sibyl had spoken of Christ (even by repeating "prophecies that had been heard") had not Virgil referred to her in this Eclogue, —for the reference of the Eclogue to Christ was to his mind too patent to admit of any reasonable doubt. So it came about that the *Dies irae* (whatever its date) ranks the Sibyl side by side with David.

Such, too, was the belief of the poet Dante. Every one is familiar with the unique position of honour which Virgil holds in the *Divina Commedia* as the interpreter of the Divine will and the poet's guide through two-thirds of the unseen world. Nor is this due merely to reverence for Virgil as a poet. Explicitly and many times Dante ascribes to him the power of converting men to a knowledge of divine truth.<sup>1</sup> At the outset, when Dante *facile crederem, nisi quod poetarum quidam in Romana lingua nobilissimus antequam diceret ea de innouatione saeculi quae in Domini nostri Jesu Christi regnum satis concinere et conuenire uideantur, praeposuit uersum, dicens, Ultima Cumaevi iam carminis aetas.*" Augustine's wording has the caution of a true scholar.

<sup>1</sup> On Dante's representation of the relation of Virgil to Christianity, I cannot do better than refer the reader to the very interesting and scholarly Excursus (to which I am not a little indebted), in Notter's *Dante's Göttliche Comödie übersetzt u. erläutert*, Stuttgart, 1871 (vol. i. p. 517).

was lost in the *selva oscura*, the dark forest of worldly ambitions, it was Virgil who came to "lead him home" (*a ca' riduce mi—Inf. xv. 54*) by a marvellous way; and it is Beatrice herself, the impersonation of divine grace, who has sent Virgil on his errand. As she commissions him<sup>1</sup> she declares, "When I stand before my Divine Master, I will often speak thy praise to Him." And in a passage<sup>2</sup> on which a flood of light has been recently thrown by Dr Verrall, Dante makes the poet Statius, whom he thought<sup>3</sup> to have been a Christian, attribute to Virgil, and to the Fourth Eclogue in particular, his own first interest in Christianity.

"What sun or what candles," asks Virgil,<sup>4</sup> "so dispelled thy darkness that thou didst direct thy sails to follow the Fisherman" (*i.e.* St. Peter)? And Statius replied: "Thou it was that first leddest me towards

<sup>1</sup> *Inferno*, ii. 73, and indeed the whole speech from l. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Purg.* xxii. 61.

<sup>3</sup> The origin of this belief on Dante's part has been set beyond doubt by Dr Verrall's brilliant article, "To follow the Fisherman" (*Indep. Rev.*, i., 1903, p. 246).

<sup>4</sup> I quote from Mr Arthur Butler's admirable prose translation, with only occasional modifications.

Parnassus . . . . and next didst light me on the road to God. Thou didst as one who goes by night, who bears a light behind him and helps not himself, but after him makes the people wise, when thou saidst, 'The world renews itself: justice returns and the first age of man; and a new offspring descends from Heaven.' Through thee I was a poet, through thee a Christian. . . . Already was the whole world teeming with the true belief, sown by the messages of the eternal realm: and thy word . . . . was in harmony with the new preachers, wherefore I began to visit them. And at last they came to seem to me so holy that when Domitian persecuted them, their complaints were not without tears from me. And so long as [I was] in the world I aided them, and their righteous manners made me hold all other philosophies of small price. . . . Thou then . . . . didst lift the covering that hid from me so much good."

In our own country it is scarcely two hundred years<sup>1</sup> since Pope published his *Messiah*, in the preface to which he accepts the view of Augustine, namely, that the

<sup>1</sup> 1709 is the date of the *Pastorals*.

prophecy of an unnamed child was taken by Virgil from the Sibyl, and in her lips had been a prediction of Christ. Pope followed the tradition of his own church; but even his Protestant critic, Samuel Johnson,<sup>1</sup> does not seem for a moment to demur.

In all this, then, we see that the outstanding reason for the Christian interpretation of the Eclogue was the fact that the child was not

<sup>1</sup> *Lives of the Poets* (ed. M. Arnold), p. 419.

Pope made an interesting contribution to the criticism of the Eclogue by collecting the six or seven passages in it, and the Fifth Eclogue (which, as we now know, relates to the deification of Julius Cæsar) in which the poetical imagery resembles that of the similar prophecies of a regenerated world in Isaiah. Now it is true that Virgil's snake and lions do not behave quite like Isaiah's; true also that similar parallels can be found without difficulty, as the commentators show, in Greek and Latin poets; but their combination in one poem renders at least possible, though perhaps not very probable, the ingenious theory of Mr H. W. Garrod (*Class. Rev.*, 1904, p. 37), that they were taken by Virgil from some poem of Pollio's own—since from Josephus it appears that Pollio had Jewish connexions, and it is possible that a Pharisee named Pollio (*Josephus*, xv. 1. 1) was actually related to him. The literary problem, which seems to me distinct from the general question of Virgil's attitude towards Messianic doctrine, is discussed in the third of these Essays, which demonstrates the existence of many other links in the chain between Virgil and Jewish prophecy.

named. I have already expressed my conviction that Virgil had in mind a real child whose birth was expected. On the question what child it was whom Virgil meant, I can hardly do more<sup>1</sup> than state the conclusion to which I was led some time ago ; but I do so with confidence, because I find that it has been reached by several distinguished scholars independently of one another—Henry Nettleship, Mr Warde Fowler, and one of the first of living German Latinists, Professor Skutsch<sup>2</sup> of Breslau.

The plain fact is, that the “father” who has given peace to the world can be no one but Octavian ; the child who is to rule the world can have been in Virgil’s mind no other than the heir to the empire, whose birth was expected in the latter half of 40 B.C., but who, in fact, was never born. To Octavian’s bitter disappointment the child

<sup>1</sup> As to the theory that the child was a son of Pollio see Mr Warde Fowler’s paper, p. 80, foll. Who can believe that Pollio was the father of the child when Virgil only calls him the consul in whose year the child is to be born ?

<sup>2</sup> *Aus Vergil’s Frühzeit*, pp. 148-160. Professor J. W. Mackail tells me, too, that he has now reached the same conclusion.



whom Scribonia bore him early in 39 B.C. was a girl, the Julia whose happiness was to be so deeply chequered by her father's dynastic designs. Scribonia was divorced upon the same day, having lost the one strong claim she might have possessed to the Emperor's gratitude.<sup>1</sup> But Virgil's Eclogue had been already published, and was itself, as an ante-natal ode must always be, more concerned with the father than the child, more indeed with the hopes of the world than with either father or child. To cancel the poem later on would have been to draw men's attention to Scribonia's misfortune and the Emperor's greatest perplexity, his want of an heir; it was therefore allowed to stand, enigma though it had become.<sup>2</sup> Who could possibly have foretold the extraordinary influence upon the history of the world with which this wise and gentle silence was destined to endue the poet? Or that the authority derived from it would be great

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cassius, *xlvi.* 34. There can be no doubt that this is the true interpretation of the divorce; it was given first, I believe, by Mr Warde Fowler in 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Rothstein pointed out to Skutsch a precise parallel, an unfulfilled prophecy (of an heir to Domitian) which still survives in Martial (*vi.* 3).

enough to model for many centuries, if not for all time, the whole Christian conception of the after-world upon the Vision of Æneas in the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*?

If, then, we may at last leave behind us the controversies which have gathered round this particular fragment of Virgil's poetry, we come to a rather wider question. Do Virgil's other writings show anything like the hope of a Messiah? and if so, what kind of a Messiah do they foreshadow? We have seen that certain external coincidences with Christian tradition were merely accidental: is there beneath these any real harmony?

My contention may be briefly expressed in a few statements, some of which will be, I think, admitted at once. I believe that we may and must attribute to Virgil the conscious possession of certain ideas which may be roughly enumerated as follows:—

1. That the guilt of mankind had grown to be unendurable, so that the world was pitifully in need of regeneration.
2. That the establishment of the Empire was an epoch strangely favourable to some

such ethical movement, and intended by Providence to introduce it.

3. That it was part of the duty of Rome to attempt the task.

4. That one special deliverer would be sent by Providence (or in the *Aeneid*, that a deliverer had already been sent) to begin the work.

5. That the work would involve suffering and disappointment; and that its essence lay in a new spirit, a new and more humane ideal.

Now if we can show that these were among the thoughts which moved Virgil, the admission will surely imply that, in the deepest and truest sense of the word, Virgil did "prophecy" the coming of Christianity. We should be justified in maintaining that he read the spiritual conditions of his time with profound insight, and with not less profound hope declared that some answer would be sent to the world's need. How much more than these two gifts of insight and faith men may take to be involved in the conception of a prophet we need not consider; for we shall all agree that no great religion will ever be content with less; no

mere mechanical foreknowledge has ever been or will ever be enough to make a man a great teacher of his fellows. In enquiring, therefore, into Virgil's teaching upon such points as have been suggested, we are not following some curious by-way of literary study; we are at the very heart of the central movement of history, and touching the deepest forces that have made and are making mankind.

Of the points enumerated, only the last (if even that) can be called in any sense new. The others hardly need to be justified, save that we must examine the first a little more closely if we wish to realise what kind of a world it was in which Virgil lived and wrote.

No one who is even superficially acquainted with the terrible century before Augustus (say from 133-31 B.C.) will doubt that the sufferings caused to the world by the "delirium" of its rulers<sup>1</sup> had reached an unbearable pitch. In that period of time Italy had seen twelve separate civil wars,<sup>2</sup> six of which had involved

<sup>1</sup> Hor. *Epistles*, I, 2, 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Bellum Sociale*; *Bellum Octavianum*; the return of Sulla; the wars of Lepidus, Sertorius, Spartacus, Catiline, Julius Cæsar, the Triumvirs; in 41 B.C., the

many of the provinces; a long series of political murders, beginning with the Gracchi, and ending with Cæsar and Cicero; five deliberate, legalised massacres, from the drum-head court-martial,<sup>1</sup> which sentenced to death three thousand supposed followers of Gaius Gracchus, to the second proscription dictated by Mark Antony.<sup>2</sup> Men still spoke with a shudder<sup>3</sup> of the butchery of seven thousand Samnite prisoners in the hearing of the assembled Senate, and the boy Virgil would meet many men who had seen the last act of the struggle with Spartacus and his army of escaped gladiators—six thousand prisoners nailed on crosses along the whole length<sup>4</sup> of the busiest road in Italy, from Rome to Capua. And the long record of the oppression of the provinces year by year under every fresh governor is

year before the Fourth Eclogue, the *Bellum Perusinum*; and after that, before the *Georgics* were published, the naval war with Sextus Pompeius and the final conflict with Antony.

<sup>1</sup> Orosius, v. 12.

<sup>2</sup> The three others were those of Marius and Sulla, and the execution of the followers of Spartacus.

<sup>3</sup> Cæsar, ap. Cic., *Ad Att.*, ix. 7c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> About one hundred and fifty miles; Appian, *Bell. Civil.* 1, 120.

hardly less terrible. The chief causes of this chaos were the complete decay of civil control over the military forces of the empire; the growth of capitalism and the concentration of capital in the hands of the governing class at Rome; and the economic disorder springing from the methods of ancient warfare, especially the enormous growth of slavery and the depopulation of Italy.<sup>j</sup> They are all summed up in that tremendous *Ergo* in the conclusion<sup>1</sup> of the First Georgic, which attributes the miseries of mankind directly to the just wrath of heaven.

“Therefore it was that twice Philippi saw  
The clash of Roman swords in Roman hands;  
Nor did high heaven disdain twice to enrich  
The broad Thessalian plain with Roman blood.”

And the same evils have their place in the famous contrast between the peaceful toil of the farmer and the corrupt, reckless ambitions of political life, which closes the Second

<sup>1</sup> G. i. 489:

Ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis  
Romanas acies iterum uidere Philippi.  
Nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro  
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.

Georgic. Hardly even Cicero, and certainly no other man of that generation, felt the shame of that corruption as did Virgil. With burning scorn he points to the roads by which the greatest men<sup>1</sup> of his age had won their way to power.

"Some fret with labouring oars the treacherous sea  
 Eager to trade in slaughter, breaking through  
 The pomp and sentinels of ancient kings.  
 This man will storm a town and sack its homes,  
 To drink from alabaster, sleep in purple.  
 His rival hoards up gold and broods alone  
 On buried treasure. That man's dream is set  
 On power to sway a crowd by eloquence,  
 Or so command the acclaim of high and low  
 That vast assemblies at his coming vie  
 To fill his ears with plaudits. Here the victors  
 March proud of brothers' blood upon their hands;  
 There steal the vanquished, torn from home and  
 children,  
 To seek new fatherlands in alien skies."

And in the *Aeneid*, who can forget the picture of the fall of Troy, with the concentrated pathos of its central scene, the

<sup>1</sup> G. ii. 503-512. Every Roman reader must have felt the indictment which these lines framed against the first triumvirs, though not against them only: the oriental triumphs of Pompey with his enormous force: the cruelty of Cæsar's Gallic Wars (especially, perhaps, the siege of Alesia); and the miser's wealth of their partner Crassus may well have been in the poet's mind.

butchery of Polites before his father's and his mother's eyes, and of Priam himself upon the steps of the altar? And what is the tremendous machinery of punishment after death which the Sixth Book describes in the most majestic passage<sup>1</sup> of all epic poetry but the measure of Virgil's sense of human guilt?

That the advent of the Empire, with the possibility which it offered of universal peace, seemed to Virgil the providential forerunner of even greater blessings, is clearly stated all through the *Aeneid*. Not less clear is the part which he deemed the temporal power of Rome was to play in the new growth of society; and almost equally clear is the function he assigns to the idealised Augustus.<sup>2</sup> In other words, few readers of Virgil will doubt the truth of the next three steps in my argument. One comment only may be here permitted, though it is so simple that at first sight it may seem almost trivial. Free communication between different parts of the

<sup>1</sup> ii. 506-558; vi. 548-627. To see how far, at his greatest, Virgil towers above the thought of the Homeric age, compare this passage with *Odyssey*, xi. 576-600.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, G. i. *ad fin.* *Aen.* i. 289-296.



world was made possible by the new roads, the new postal system, and the complete suppression of war by land and of piracy by sea ; and these things, which marked the accession of Augustus, lasted through the first three centuries of the Empire—precisely the period in which Christianity grew to be a world-religion. Has such freedom of travel ever been known again, I wonder, in any other three centuries of history? We may repeat a saying of Pope Leo the Great<sup>1</sup> (440-461 A.D.), which anticipated many eloquent pages of Professor Freeman : “To the end that the fruit of God’s unspeakable grace might be diffused throughout the world, the Divine Providence created beforehand the dominion of Rome.”

We come now to my chief and last point, the character of the change that Virgil prophesied, and the spirit in which it was to be sought. And this will explain what may have seemed an inconsistency in the argument hitherto. How can you, it may be objected, see in Virgil’s writings any

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Notter, *l.c.* p. 526. *Ut enarrabilis gratiae per totum mundum diffunderetur effectus, Romanum regnum divina providentia praeeparavit.*

anticipation of a spiritual Messiah, when Virgil declares that Augustus is the deliverer he celebrates, that Augustus' work is to bring the great reformation? If Virgil was in the end content to accept as the Deliverer a personality so full of blots, can we interpret seriously his loftier predictions? But such a criticism is based on a misconception. Virgil was not content with the past or present weaknesses of the particular human being called Octavian; he condemns roundly, as we have seen, the violent deeds linked with his earlier career; what Virgil extols is the vast service<sup>1</sup> which Augustus was visibly rendering to mankind, and the still higher service which seemed to lie in the new ideal of the Empire. In the passage devoted to Augustus in *Aeneid* vi., there is no mention of his triumphs in war; his first glory is the recall of the Golden Age of Justice;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This conception of service to humanity marks all the praise of Augustus in Virgil, as I have shown elsewhere (in the *Proceedings of the Classical Association* for 1906), and separates it somewhat widely from the tributes of Propertius, Tibullus, and even of Horace; and by a great gulf from the abominable flatteries of Domitian in Martial.

<sup>2</sup> vi. 792.

Aurea condet  
Saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arua  
Saturno quondam.

the last, his journeying in peace through the Empire, like the traveller Hercules who tamed the wild beasts of the forest, like Liber who yoked his tigers to the chariot of harvest-rejoicing.

What, then, was the new ideal? It was the conception of peace by forgiveness, of conciliation instead of punishment, — in a word, the ideal of mercy. It was indeed for a part of this, that is, for just and humane government, that Cicero had lived and died; and from him Julius Cæsar had learnt, ere the end of his stormy career, the great political secret of forgetting offences; but the deeper ethical note, the human sympathy and tenderness of Virgil's appeal to the world, is all his own. In his great picture-gallery of Roman heroes,<sup>1</sup> nothing surely is more striking than the faint praise or open censure which he bestows on those who were merely great warriors, like King Tullus, the Tarquins, or Torquatus "of the cruel axe." Of Brutus, the first consul, who sentenced his own son to death for conspiring against the republic, Virgil's kindest word is *infelix*. Of Julius Cæsar we have nothing but a lament for his

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vi. 756-846.

share in the Civil War,<sup>1</sup> and a prophetic entreaty to him (in the lips of Anchises) to be the first to throw away the sword; and in this delicate, poetic homage to the great dictator, who shall say if there is more praise than regret?

Among the characters with whom he peoples Elysium, Virgil sets the faithful warriors only at the beginning;<sup>2</sup> in the climax come the virtues of peace and human affection :

“Whoso through life kept priestly honour pure,  
Or found new arts and made the world more fair,  
They whose good service made their memory loved,  
These all are crowned with wreaths of snowy wool.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vi. 832-835. After prophesying the war between Cæsar and Pompey, Anchises continues :—

Ne pueri, ne tanta animis adsuescite bella,  
Neu patriae ualidas in uiscera uertite uires.  
Tuque prior, tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo,  
Proice tela manu, sanguis meus.

<sup>2</sup> Hic manus ob patriam pugnando uolnera passi,  
Quique sacerdotes casti dum uita manebat,  
Inuentas aut qui uitam excoluere per artes,  
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo,  
Omnibus his niuea cinguntur tempora uitta.

*Aen.* vi. 662-665. And the warriors are only admitted because they “have suffered wounds in defending their country” (*ob patriam*, not merely *pro patria*).

It is impossible to translate words like *excoluere*, which

And in the same vision of Anchises we have the famous description of the duty to which Rome is called :<sup>1</sup>—

“ Others I well believe with finer touch  
 Shall kindle breath in forms of bronze, and carve  
 Faces of marble all aglow with life ;  
 Others shall plead with greater eloquence,  
 Make chart of Heaven and tell the rising stars ;  
 But choose thou, son of Rome, the imperial task  
 Of ruling peoples ; this shall be thy art,  
 Show mercy to the humble, crush the proud,  
 And make the nations learn the law of peace.”

But the fullest embodiment of this conception is in the second half of the *Aeneid*. The story gives us a dramatic picture of the ideal ruler in conflict with the concrete forces of selfishness, passion, and ignor-

suggests turning a wilderness into a garden ; *artes*, which includes philosophic, artistic, and poetic creation as well as mechanical inventions : and *merendo*, which includes every form of service rendered to one's fellows ; nor can the golden simplicity of the whole passage be conveyed by any translation.

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vi. 847-853.

Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera,—  
 Credo equidem,—uiuos ducent de marmore uoltus :  
 Orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus  
 Describent radio et surgentia sidera dicent :  
 Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;  
 Hæ tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem  
 Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

ance; a picture more profound than any that the art of Homer ever essayed to draw, and for that reason losing something of the fresh, boyish delight in stirring action that rings all through the battles on the Trojan plain. The whole fabric of Virgil's narrative, we can hardly doubt, is woven out of the impressions made upon him by the history<sup>1</sup> of his time; but we can trace here only its central thread, a thread of gold. The thought that shines through the story is that no such warfare ought to be; that it is not the natural but the unnatural, or as Virgil calls it, the "impious" way of settling human questions; that reasonableness and pity are the greatest prerogatives of power.

For observe that Æneas enters Italy not

<sup>1</sup> We can only note in passing how closely the enemies of Æneas resemble the leaders of strife in Rome. The likeness of Turnus to Antony, of Mezentius to Catiline (both Etruscans, by the way—this is shown in Catiline's case by the form of his name, one of the masculines in -a), of Latinus to Pompey, cannot be accidental. And is it wholly by chance that the half-plebeian Drances represents with such eloquence the humane and law-abiding patriotism of Cicero, but, like Cicero, cannot resist the temptation to spoil a noble plea by one bitter shaft of invective (the word *pulsus*, in *Aen.* xi. 366)?

as an invader, but as a friend ; no freebooter, but a pilgrim, seeking only to execute divine commands. The war is created by the powers of evil.

"Mischief, thou art afoot ; take thou what course thou wilt,"

cries Shakspeare's Antony, as the mob he has excited rush off to murder the innocent Cinna. It is the same cruel, unscrupulous passion which Virgil portrays when Juno<sup>1</sup> sends the Fury to incite the Latins to break faith with Æneas. Mark her commission.

"Thine is the power to embroil kind brothers' hands,  
Sink homes in hatred, light the father's pyre,  
And make his freeborn children dread the lash.  
A thousand names, a thousand mischiefs thou !  
Wake all thy cunning : break their solemn treaty,  
Sow slanderous seed that blood may be the harvest,  
And fill at once hearts, voices, hands with war."

To this spirit the brave, patient humanity of Æneas is in perpetual contrast. In words

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vii. 335-340.

Tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres,  
Atque odiis uersare domos, tu uerbera tectis  
Funereasque inferre faces. Tibi nomina mille,  
Mille nocendi artes : fecundum concute pectus,  
Disiice compositam pacem, sere crimina belli ;  
Arma uelit poscatque simul rapiatque iuventus.

it is expressed clearly in his speech to the Latin envoys;<sup>1</sup> but the most striking, and, as one is tempted to say, the most un-Roman example, is his conflict with Lausus. Æneas is pressing Mezentius hard: his young son Lausus rushes in to save his father, and proudly insists on continuing the combat himself when Mezentius has retreated. In vain Æneas warns and tries to spare him; the Etruscans gather in support of Lausus, who will not be stayed until the spear of Æneas has pierced his heart. How does Æneas regard him then?<sup>2</sup>

“But when he saw the dying look and face,  
The face so wondrous pale, Anchises’ son  
Uttered a deep groan, pitying him, and stretched  
His right hand forth, as in his soul there rose  
The likeness of the love he bore his sire.  
‘Poor boy! What guerdon for thy glorious deeds,  
Say what, to match that mighty heart of thine  
Shall good Æneas yield thee? Those thine arms  
Wherein thou gloried’st, keep them; and thyself,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* xi. 108-119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* x. 821-832. The version is that of Mr James Rhoades, save that, greatly daring, I have made one or two slight changes at the end, where Mr Rhoades’ beautiful lines seemed perhaps to have sacrificed some fraction of the strength of the Latin. I should perhaps add that this is the only one of the renderings of Virgil in this paper which I have ventured to borrow.



If such desire can touch thee, to the shades  
And ashes of thy fathers I restore.'

Then calls he the lad's followers, chiding them  
For laggards, and uplifts their fallen lord,  
His comely boyish hair all stained with blood."

There is no such scene in Homer, nor, unless I mistake, in any other poetry before that of Christian chivalry. And it is thrown into high relief by the contrast with the savagery of Turnus,<sup>1</sup> who allows no one but himself to slay the young prince Pallas, and cries, "Would that his father were here to see him fall."

In the crowning scene of the *Aeneid* this cruelty recoils on Turnus himself. As he lies defeated and begs for mercy, Æneas stays his hand and is about to spare even Turnus. But his eye falls on the baldric of Pallas which Turnus had taken for himself, and his grief for Pallas rouses again the temper of the warrior and the judge. Turnus must die. "Pallas," he cries, "Pallas slays thee," and plunged his sword full in Turnus' breast. "The chill of death relaxed his frame, and moaning his spirit fled

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* xi. 443.

indignant through the darkness.”<sup>1</sup> Moaning and indignant, the defeated rebel ends his course : pitiful and indignant, Virgil ends the story. The ruthless Turnus could not be trusted to live in the new era ; but oh, the pity of his fall, the pity of his punishment ! Nowhere more exquisitely does Virgil “stretch out his hands in longing for the further shore,” nowhere more touchingly express his sense of the incompleteness of the greatest human triumph, than by this last line of the *Aeneid*, his last word to mankind. His hero has fought, has suffered long, has conquered ; yet his conquest itself is cause for sorrow, because it shows that the deeper enemy, the wilfulness of human passion, has yet to be destroyed. Surely, if more than human breath ever moved in human utterance, some whisper at least of divine inspiration must be heard in such an ending to such a poem as this. In Dante’s words we think of Virgil as of “one who

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* xii. 952. *Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata per umbras.* The Homeric warrior dies “moaning over his own fate,” but not “indignant.” Only Virgil has room for this touch. Observe that the ethical colour of the word is even stronger in Latin than in English because of its close association with *dignus* and *dignari*.

goes by night and bears a light behind him, and after him makes the people wise." It was what we call an accident that gave to the author of the Fourth Eclogue such authority among Christians that his teaching was studied as almost an integral part of the Christian revelation; but it was not an accident that his teaching was so profound, so pure, so merciful. Understood in the only way possible to the mind of the early centuries, that Eclogue made him a direct prophet, and therefore an interpreter of Christ; and it is not the deepest students of Virgil who have thought him unworthy of that divine ministry.

## THE CHILD OF THE POEM

BY W. WARDE FOWLER

It is now some years since Mr Mackail warned us, in his admirable and suggestive volume on Latin literature,<sup>1</sup> that there is no great mystery in the Fourth Eclogue, and that it is in reality only a poem of nature. "The enchanted light which lingers over it is hardly distinguishable from that which saturates the *Georgics*. . . . It is not so much a vision of a golden age as Nature herself seen through a medium of strange gold." We have been led astray, he tells us, by ancient misconceptions of its ideas and imagery; the Sibylline verses which suggested these "were really but the accidental grain of dust round which the crystallisation of the poem began."

<sup>1</sup> *Latin Literature* (1895), p. 94.

This is not so much the judgment of a student as of a scholar and a man of letters; it is the carefully expressed opinion of one who has the true Virgilian feeling, and who knows the poet through and through, as his translations of all the poems of Virgil amply testify. Even if we call it one-sided or paradoxical, it is at least wholesome for the student; for the training of the modern "philolog" is not apt to produce that feeling for a poet's mind without which, after all, the best criticism of poetry is unattainable.

More than a warning, however, it cannot be, in spite of the truth contained in it. There are some literary works about which the *dura cupido* of scholars will always continue to exercise itself, and this little poem is one of them; and as it happens fortunately that its poetry is not of the very highest order, and that the speculations it suggests are so various as to lead the student into many by-paths of ancient life and literature, we may assume that Virgil has here suffered no great hurt from his commentators, while they have gained something by their labours. There is certainly no sign that they are giving up those labours as useless. In the

voluminous study of the Eclogues published in 1897 by M. Cartault, Professor of Latin Poetry at Paris, may be found some account of a vast number of discussions which have appeared on the subject during the last thirty or forty years, in France, Germany, Italy, England, and America.<sup>1</sup> Since the publication of his book yet more have been added to the number; and two of these are among the most interesting I have seen. A paper by Professor Sir W. M. Ramsay on "the meeting of Horace and Virgil," containing some most instructive remarks on our poem, was published in 1898 in the *Proceedings of the Franco-Scottish Society*, and only came into my hands through the kindness of its writer. Since then again, in the *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* (November, 1900), the distinguished French savant, M. Salomon Reinach, has written an essay of very curious interest, suggesting an entirely new interpretation of the Eclogue. And now I, too, am under the impression, or delusion, that I have something worth saying in the debate.

It is not my purpose, however, to discuss

<sup>1</sup> *Étude sur les Bucoliques de Virgile*, pp. 210 foll.

the poem in detail; I propose to deal chiefly with the last four lines of it, and with their bearing, as I understand it, on the rest of the poem. I shall also hope to show how they may serve as a useful touchstone to distinguish false criticism from true, and how some good critics have been misled, as I think, by failing to give them their due weight. Among these I am compelled to reckon both Professor Ramsay and M. Reinach; and as it is not likely that many scholars have become acquainted with the contributions of either of these, owing to the character of the periodicals in which they were published,<sup>1</sup> I will start with a brief account and criticism of their suggestions. It may be as well, however, just to remind the reader that there are three main questions arising out of a study of the poem, apart from certain obscurities of detail. These are: 1. What was Virgil's purpose in writing it, and in connecting it, as he clearly did, with the consulship of Pollio in 40 B.C.? 2. Who or what was the child whose birth it celebrates and whose fortunes it foretells? 3. Whence did Virgil

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 95 note.

draw the very peculiar ideas and imagery of the poem? These questions have been variously answered ever since the age of the earliest Roman commentators: but I suppose that the views most generally held both in ancient and modern times have been—(1) that the poet sought to celebrate the consulship of Pollio, and the peace of Brundisium, by describing a golden age now again to appear on earth in the course of a cycle of ages, under the united auspices of Octavianus and Antonius: (2) that the child who was to see, inaugurate, and typify the new age, was a real infant, born or expected in 40 B.C., and probably a son of Pollio himself: (3) that the poet drew his ideas and imagery from Sibylline verses now lost, from Hesiod, from Orphic poets, possibly even from Hebrew prophets, and to some extent from his Roman predecessors. Let us go on at once to compare these familiar explanations with the views of Professor Ramsay and M. Reinach.

Professor Ramsay was led to his conclusions in the course of working out the subject of his paper—the intercourse of Horace and Virgil. Assuming that the



sixteenth Epode of Horace was published separately, or rather, as we may perhaps say, was known to literary circles before the book of Epodes as a whole, and probably at the time of the Perusian war in 41 B.C., he explains its obvious likeness to the Fourth Eclogue by supposing that the latter was in some sense an answer to it. Horace, in despair at the new outbreak of civil war, had fancifully suggested that the Italian race should migrate like the Phocæan of old to the far west, where, as Sertorius had been told in Spain, lay the islands of the blest. Virgil answers him thus (I quote Professor Ramsay's words): "Seek not the better age in a fabled island of the west. It is here and now with us. The child already born in Italy will inaugurate it and live in it. The period upon which Italy is now entering more than fulfils in real life the dream of a Golden Age perpetuated in a distant or fabulous island. The marvels which are told of that island are being realised now in Italy under the new order, through the influence of peace and prudence and organisation. The new Roman generation will in this way destroy every noxious

al, and will make the land  
 own people by the good  
 : grows all products in  
 will improve the natural  
 make the thorn-tree laugh  
 h flowers.<sup>1</sup> By naturalising  
 ows in foreign lands, it will  
 dependent of imports, and  
 he too daring art of naviga-  
 gue was, like Locksley Hall,  
 e world and all the wonders  
 that should be,' after the new empire of  
 Rome should have had time to show men  
 what science and government, working in  
 unison, could do for Italy."<sup>1</sup>

Thus there was no need to ask who the fortunate child was that should see and inaugurate such bliss. "In the vision of the coming age the scenery is Italian, and the new-born child is the representative of the new Roman generation." On this point Professor Ramsay expresses himself dogmatically: "it is a total misconception of Virgil's intention, to look for any

<sup>1</sup> Professor Ramsay has now repeated these views in the *Expositor* (May and Aug. 1907); but I may be allowed to retain the passage as it originally stood

reference to an actual human child. . . . The child of whom Virgil sings is the representative of the new Rome, bearer of its majesty and power, favoured of the gods, shielded by them from all evil, guided by them to greatness and empire." And following the phases of the prophetic poem, he shows that though this child must be educated to war,<sup>1</sup> yet the arts of peace are his real inheritance: and that in aiming at the *honores* which are the summit of a Roman's ambition, he is but fulfilling his mission, — the mission of giving lasting happiness to the world.

These sentences are so full both of historical and poetical feeling that I am almost tempted to adopt them as a whole; and indeed if I could understand them to mean that Virgil was taking some individual child unknown to us to represent the coming Italian generation and its happiness, I

<sup>1</sup> Professor Ramsay sees in the puzzling lines 34-36 (*Alter erit tum Tiphys*, etc.) an allusion to the Parthian expedition upon which Antony was about to set out; and this seems to me also the simplest and most natural explanation of them, seeing that the defeat of Parthia might well seem, at the moment of the peace of Brundisium, the only thing wanting to the peace of the world and the hopes of Italy.

should do so without scruple. But Professor Ramsay most explicitly forbids me so to understand him (p. 11). To him the child is an abstraction, an idealised generation now beginning. This idea is not indeed wholly new; it was long ago suggested by Heyne, whose explanation is adopted by Merivale in his account of the events of this year.<sup>1</sup> But as I understand Heyne, he did not altogether exclude the idea of the birth of an individual child; he rather thought that the first and representative child of the new era, though unknown both to Virgil and to us, was yet some real infant of flesh and blood: *deflexit itaque orationem in puerum illum qui primus in saeculi huius auspiciis est nasciturus*. If so, he had, I think, entered even more fully than Professor Ramsay into the spirit of the poem: *he had taken account of its last lines*, of which Professor Ramsay makes no mention at all. We may accept in full the view that the hope in Virgil's mind was a regenerate and well-tilled Italy; that Italy was foremost in his mind here as ever there can be no doubt, but we must

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Heyne-Wagner, I, 128. Merivale, *Hist.* vol. iii. p. 231.

add the conviction that no mere abstraction  
can be the object of such lines as these :

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem ;  
Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses.  
Incipe, parve puer : qui non risere parenti  
Nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

We may read through the poem up to this point and find little seriously out of harmony with Professor Ramsay's interpretation—unless indeed it be the preference for the tangible and the concrete which was natural to the Roman and to Virgil himself; but when we come to this curiously realistic termination we are suddenly brought up, and forced either to reconstruct our idea of the child, or to let these lines drop out of sight altogether. Professor Ramsay has adopted the latter alternative.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Ramsay in the *Expositor* (p. 108) has stated his view even more positively than in his former paper. He says that there is no idea in the poem of deifying either Augustus personally or a son of his who might hereafter be born, and adds in a footnote that the opinion which I myself hold (as will be seen later on) that the poem celebrates the birth of an expected son, who, unfortunately for the poet, turned out to be a daughter, is "too ludicrous for anyone but a confirmed literary and 'higher' critic. A poet does not work so; even a poet laureate could not work under

I now turn to a very different and far more eccentric explanation ; one which is extremely interesting and incidentally useful, but hardly, I think, the work of a man of strong poetic feeling or thorough knowledge of Virgil. M. Reinach<sup>1</sup> emphatically denies that the poem contains any kind of historical allusion, or stands in any sort of relation to the events of Virgil's age. "Je me propose," he writes,<sup>2</sup> "d'établir qu'il n'y a pas d'allusions historiques ou politiques dans la IV Eglogue, qu'il n'y est question ni du fils de Pollion, ni du fils d'aucun autre personnage du temps, enfin que la caractère du poème tout entier est exclusivement religieux ou mystique." He adds, with some force, that if Virgil had not addressed the poem to Pollio, and placed the birth of the child in Pollio's consulship,

such conditions." I am sorry to differ from an old friend, for whom I have the profoundest respect ; I can only say that I would ask him to re-consider the poem in the light of the last four lines. I look on it as the celebration, in mystical, and as the writers of these Essays believe, Messianic language, of the actual birth of a real child, who is destined to initiate a new era of happiness for Italy and the world.

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, vol. xlii. p. 365 fol.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 372.

no one would have dreamt that its subject was the birth of the consul's son. Certainly: but in the first place, we are not compelled to believe the child to have been a son of Pollio: in the second, why did Virgil put the birth so manifestly in this year, 40 B.C.? M. Reinach does indeed answer this last question, but vaguely and feebly: "without doubt it was on the authority of a current prophecy or of a mystical calculation of which we know nothing." The idea of a historical allusion is in his view simply the creation of foolish scholiasts, and only proves the ignorance of the ancient grammarians, "*qui forgeaient à plaisir, pour expliquer les textes, des explications tirées de ces textes eux-mêmes*" (p. 373). Here he seems to approach the point of view of Mr Mackail; both look on the poem as deeply overlaid with rubbish by the perversity of human learning. But the difference between them is this: Mr Mackail clears the rubbish away, and asks us to look at a beautiful original without asking questions about it, while M. Reinach, though equally at pains to get rid of the old deposits, proceeds — if I may venture so to express it—to provide us with

a fresh supply from a new and unexpected source.

I doubt if he would have been led to this source if he had not happened on an idea dropped by the German mythologist, O. Gruppe,<sup>1</sup> and abandoned by him. M. Reinach picked up this idea, was greatly attracted by it, and has most ingeniously worked it out. First, he observes that the infant of the poem is *the son of Jupiter*. But is this really so? Can *magnum Iovis incrementum* (line 49) bear this meaning? *Incrementum* is a rare and rather vague word, and seems chosen, in careful keeping with the general tenor of the poem, to express some less direct relation than actual sonship. When not so many years afterwards Ovid used the word in his *Metamorphoses* (iii. 103), he could hardly have failed to remember Virgil's famous use of it: yet he has given

<sup>1</sup> *Griechische Kulte und Mythen*, i. 637 fol. ; a passage of value for the student of the Jewish Sibylline oracles and their relation to the literature of the last century B.C. In comparing Sibyll. III. 787 fol. and Isaiah xi. 6, he notes the essential difference between the idea inherent in both of these and the language of our poem, 18-30. On these Sibyllines see also Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Div. ii. vol. iii. p. 271 fol. (Eng. trans.).



it quite a different meaning from that claimed by M. Reinach. In the line *Vipereos dentes, populi incrementa futuri*, it is used to express the active power of the dragon's teeth to produce a human crop; and so in our poem it has generally been taken to mean that the child will actively carry out in his life the work of Jupiter.<sup>1</sup>

But having settled it that the child is the son of Jupiter, M. Reinach goes happily on his way. This son of Jupiter is to rule a world restored to peace by his father's virtues: *pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem* (line 17). Now it was Jupiter who restored the universe to peace when he conquered the Titans: and thus, though *orbis* does not usually mean the universe,<sup>2</sup> and though many Virgilian scholars will take *patriis virtutibus*

<sup>1</sup> See Dr Mayor below, pp. 111-114 and 138. Heyne explained it as *alumnus et nutricius*, θρέμμα Διός, διωτρέφης. M. Cartault (*op. cit.*, p. 224, note), though without quoting Ovid's line, explains Virgil's words thus: "Jupiter sera grandi par la naissance d'un tel enfant."

<sup>2</sup> *Orbis*, as M. Reinach says (p. 373, note), may now and again be used for *mundus* (e.g. *Ov. Fasti*, i. 85): but I cannot for a moment believe that it can have that meaning here. To me the connexion of Pollio's consulship with the government of the universe seems simply grotesque.

with *reget* rather than with *pacatum*, what Virgil means is that the cycle of events will recur, and that a new son of Jupiter is to arise—a new divine dynasty. This idea, M. Reinach tells us, Virgil found in the Orphic poetry and mysteries. This must be so (so he appears to me to argue), because he certainly found another idea there, which is also prominent in the poem — viz. that of original sin and its purgation: *Si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri, Inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras* (lines 13-14). “Les hommes descendaient des Titans, qui avaient tué et dépecé le jeune Dionysus Zagreus; ils portaient le poids de ce crime et ne pouvaient s’en affranchir que par l’initiation aux mystères.”<sup>1</sup> As in this initiation the worshipper partook of the nature of the god—became in fact a young Dionysus, so Virgil prophesies a divine nature for his infant—*Ille Deum vitam accipiet* (line 15). Such verses are cast in the language of Orphic initiation, says M. Reinach,<sup>2</sup> and find their exact analogy in that of the Petelian tablet and others from Sybaris, surviving from the Orphic rites of Magna

<sup>1</sup> P. 375.<sup>2</sup> P. 375 fol.

Graecia.<sup>1</sup> It would have been well, I think, if he had stopped here, and contented himself with pointing out a possible and as yet unnoticed source of the peculiar language of the poem.

But we are thus only prepared for a startling conclusion as to the character and identity of the marvellous child. It is a new Dionysus whose approach the poet announces. "Dionysus has suffered, died, risen again, but these events belong to a cycle which is expiring; the coming age of gold is to witness the new epiphany of Dionysus, as the new beginning of all things." This is the secret which it has taken nearly two thousand years to discover. The child is Dionysus, son of Jupiter: the language and ideas are Orphic, with a large infusion of Hebraism from Jewish Sibylline verses: and the still youthful Virgil has chosen to introduce a poem of Dionysiac mythology among his

<sup>1</sup> *C. I. Graec.-Ital.* 638 (from Petelia in S. Italy: in the British Museum): καὶ τὸν ἔπειτ' ἀ[λλοιοῖσι μεθ'] ἠρώεσσιν ἀνάξει[s]: cp. *divisque videbit Permixtos heroas et ipse videbitur illis* (lines 15, 16). So too 641 (from Thurii): θεὸς δ' ἔσθι ἀντὶ βροτοῖο reminds us of *Ille deum vitam accipiet*. On these tablets see the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. iii. 111 fol. (Comparetti).

simple Theocritean Eclogues. Well indeed might he herald it with the high-sounding line *Sicelides Musae, paulo maiora canamus!*

It does not indeed seem to me impossible that Virgil, whose tendency to mysticism and Pythagoreanism are sufficiently attested by the Sixth Aeneid, who must have been familiar with the writings of his elder contemporary, Nigidius Figulus (the most learned Neo-Pythagorean of the age), and who had probably already spent some time at Tarentum,<sup>1</sup> may have been acquainted with the language of the mysteries of Magna Graecia, and used it for his own purposes. So much, I think, we may say that we have gained by M. Reinach's interesting essay. But for a sense of sin we need not go so far; it was in the air when the poem was written. From the death of Julius to the complete settlement of Augustus' power we find it continually recurring. Virgil himself, Sallust, Livy, and Horace, all express it in one way or another: the failure of the national *pietas* lay heavily on the Roman mind, and it was the great merit of Augustus as a ruler that

<sup>1</sup> Nettleship, *Ancient Lives of Virgil*, p. 49; cp. *Georg.* iv. 125.

he came fully to understand this, and sought by every means in his power to lighten the burden. I do not see that the *prisca fraus* and *sceleris vestigia nostri* need any more recondite explanation than that which has always been given them,—the wickedness of the civil wars, the *Mars impius* of the first *Georgic*,<sup>1</sup> the individual selfishness in high places which our poet afterwards portrayed in the Turnus of his *Aeneid*, and the moral and physical ruin of the Italy which he loved so well. If, following the best canon of all poetical criticism, we interpret Virgil by himself, there is, I am convinced, but one conclusion to be drawn. Italy regenerate after a period of darkness and wickedness,—this is the one great idea that animates the poet's mind throughout, and may be traced onwards from this Eclogue to the last scene of the *Aeneid*.<sup>2</sup>

But there is another objection to M. Reinach's theory, and as I think, a fatal one. If the child were Dionysus, could a poet of Virgil's taste and feeling have reverted,

<sup>1</sup> *Georg.* i. 511; cp. 468.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Prof. Conway's expansion of this idea, p. 33ff.

at the end of a purely mystical and religious poem, to such unguarded realism as we find in the last four lines? One may well ask, if the infant is Dionysus and the father Jupiter, who is the mother whom the child is to recognise by smiling on her? M. Reinach confesses that he cannot discover her. She cannot be Semele: "she can never have possessed, in the eyes of the poet, a precise mythological character, for she only appears in the last four lines and in terms which would suit any mother. It is best to admit that Virgil, discarding the horrible history of the incest of Zeus with Persephone, has adopted a tradition, perhaps neo-Orphic in origin, which made some nymph or other (*une nymphe quelconque*) the mother of Dionysus-Zagreus, or one of the numerous mortals loved by the chief of the gods. If we admit this hypothesis, all the details still obscure seem to clear themselves up."<sup>1</sup> *If* we could admit it! I should not have quoted these sentences if I had not wished to show how greatly we are in danger, in these days of scientific criticism, of applying wrong methods which can only lead to absurd

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 379.

results. You cannot safely deal with a poet like Virgil as if he were a historian or a mythologist.<sup>1</sup>

Once more then these last four lines, applied as a touchstone to the interpretation of the poem as a whole, put us instantly on our guard, and save us from extravagances. They seem to bring us back to Virgil, to Italy, and to common sense; and no one has a right to deal with the Eclogue who will not give them their due place in it. But they present more than one serious difficulty, and I must now proceed to examine them in detail.

First, let us notice that there is here (after line 59) clearly a pause in the sense, and a change of mood; and these lines should in my opinion be always printed with a space between them and those which precede them, so as to indicate this pause and change; or at any rate they should begin, so to speak,

<sup>1</sup> M. Cartault (*op. cit.* p. 234) quotes from a paper in the *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie*, 1877, by Th. Plüss, another writer who laid stress on the Bacchic elements in the poem, a still more absurd conclusion: "Es fragt sich noch, wer war die Mutter? Ich denke, wenn der Vater Liber ist, ist die Mutter Libera." But M. Cartault seems to have no sense of humour—another requisite, if I may venture to say so, of good criticism—and does not betray a smile.

a new paragraph, like the last eight lines of Milton's *Lycidas*. In the language of music, the resounding tones of the full organ here come to a close, and the movement ends *piano*, in a gentle and homely cadence: we are again in touch with the homely Italian life. The effect of this pause and change can best be appreciated if, after reading the poem once, we let the mind dwell on these last lines, and then turn back to the beginning and go over it once more. Then, to me at least, it becomes clear that the bulk of the poem is a prophetic *carmen* conceived as sung by a *vates fatidica*, with whom Virgil half identifies himself, *during the actual birth of a child*; and that when the *carmen* comes to an end, the birth has actually taken place, and the *vates* turns to the new-born infant, and dropping the character of prophet, speaks to it in the language and in the tender tones of an Italian nurse.<sup>1</sup> A minute ago she was praying *Lucina* to be gracious at the birth—*Tu modo nascenti puero . . . casta fave*

<sup>1</sup> M. Cartault (p. 225 fol.) troubles himself a good deal with the question whether at the moment of the poem the child was already born or about to be born: and affirms that "on ne peut guère admettre que la composition de la IV Eglogue coïncide justement avec la



*Lucina*: and then again, as the fateful moment approaches, she cries, *Aggredere O magnos, aderit iam tempus, honores*; now the child lies before her, and the sight brings her back to the human and the present. It seems to me that the poem gains immensely in truth and beauty, showing us the true Virgilian tenderness and pity, if we look at it in this clear and undistorted light.

I have said that the *vates* now uses the language of the Italian nurse. No one has seen this so clearly, I think, as Mr R. C. Seaton, in a short paper contributed to the *Classical Review* in 1893 (p. 199); and he has also come near to reaching what I believe to be the true meaning of the last line of all, which has baffled the commentators ever since it was written. But I shall be saving space if for the present I only make reference to this sensible little paper, and quote the lines once more, as they stand in the new Oxford text of Virgil edited by Mr F. A. Hirzel:

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem :  
 Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses :  
 Incipe, parve puer : qui non risere parenti  
 Nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

---

naissance de l'enfant." I hope my next few pages will settle this point.

Here there are two difficulties: first, the old controversy, known to every Virgilian scholar, whether the smile is that of the mother which the child recognises, or that of the child, by which it owns its love for the mother. If it is the mother's smile, then we must read with the MSS., Servius, and Nonius, in the third line, *cui non risere parentes*, in order to make the third line answer intelligibly to the first: if, on the other hand, it is the child's smile, then we can safely go back upon the earliest reading which we possess, that quoted by Quintilian,<sup>1</sup> *qui non risere parentes*, or as it has been corrected by editors, "*qui non risere parenti.*" For my own part I unhesitatingly adopt the second alternative; for not only is the picture more natural if the smile is the child's,<sup>2</sup> but to my mind it is impossible that Virgil should not have been thinking of the exquisite

<sup>1</sup> ix. 3, 8. Halm, in his critical note, suggests that Quintilian's copy may have been a "*vitiosum exemplar.*" But surely we may trust Quintilian to have been careful in such matters.

<sup>2</sup> I do not know that any one has quoted in this context the following passage from Suetonius' *Life of Virgil* (ch. iv.): "*Ferunt infantem (i.e. Virgil) ut sit editus neque vagisse et adeo miti vultu fuisse ut haud dubiam spem prosperioris geniturae (i.e. horoscope) iam tum daret.*"

passage of Catullus<sup>1</sup> to which all editors refer or should refer us :

Torquatus, volo, parvulus  
Matris e gremio suae  
Porrigens teneras manus  
*Dulce rideat ad patrem*  
Semihiante labello.

I believe that Quintilian correctly copied his MS., which had *qui non risere parentes*, and that the *qui* became *cui* in later copies through a misunderstanding of the sense and the grammar, from which Quintilian, who makes it perfectly clear that he understood the plural *qui* to be followed grammatically by the singular *hunc* in the next line,<sup>2</sup> was saved by his good taste and poetical feeling. Further, I believe that Virgil really wrote "*qui non risere parentes*" — not *parenti* — and I take *parentes* as the object of *risere*, understanding it as somewhat colloquial Latin, as in Plautus, *Captivi*

<sup>1</sup> Catull. lxi. 216 fol.

<sup>2</sup> "Ex illis enim 'qui non risere,' hic, quem non dignata." I cannot follow Dr Postgate in his account of these words (*Class. Rev.*, Feb. 1902), nor in his suggestion of *hinc* for *hunc*. Quintilian had just written *Est figura et in numero, vel cum singulari pluralis subjungitur*. But Dr Postgate contends that Quintilian's copy of Virgil was a bad one.

(iii. 1, 21),<sup>1</sup> and thus suited to the simple and unconventional tone of the lines. It was not till long after I had formed this opinion, which has not found favour among my friends, that I had the pleasure of discovering that it was the opinion, very clearly expressed, of J. J. Scaliger himself, who in commenting on Catullus' *dulce rideat ad patrem* quotes this passage, and adds,<sup>2</sup> "Virgilius sine praepositione—*qui non risere parentes*. Manifesto enim hortatur puerum ut ad matrem rideat, non contra, ut illi parentes. . . . Nam '*risere parentes*' pro '*ad parentes*' dictum; ut Catullus loquitur." The note is a remarkable one, and I shall refer to it again directly; at present it will be sufficient to show that the oldest reading of the passage which we possess may, in the opinion of the greatest of scholars, stand just as it is. But this is by the way; I am here chiefly concerned with the sense, which is the same whether we read *parentes* or *parenti*; I merely desired to point out that if Virgil really wrote *parentes* it is much easier to explain the subsequent corruption (as I take it to be) into "*cui non*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Lindsay, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Castigationes in Catullum*, etc., 1577.

risere parentes," and the resulting false notion that the smile was the mother's and not the child's. As regards the sense, no doubt it is harshly expressed: *ridere* with the accusative meaning to smile on, and *qui* followed by *hunc*, are between them quite enough to frighten timid scholars: but where Quintilian and Scaliger did not hesitate to go, we need hardly fear to follow.

But there is a still more serious difficulty in the last line of all, *Nec deus hunc mensa dea nec dignata cubili est*. It is wonderful how far afield interpreters have gone for explanations of these words. It has been thought that Virgil is here alluding to a passage in the eleventh Odyssey,<sup>1</sup> where Herakles is described as having joy at the banquet (*mensa*) among the deathless gods, and having to wife Hebe of the fair ankles (*cubile*). As Mr Seaton truly says, this explains nothing at all. Servius has more than one pompous explanation from Greek mythology, quite out of keeping with the true Virgilian tone of the passage: *e.g.* Hephaestus, being born lame, was not smiled on by his mother Hera, and had

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xi. 602.

in consequence to put up with various misfortunes and disabilities. But recently Mr Seaton has suggested very happily that it was perhaps "no more than a high-flown way of expressing an old nurse's saw, that a dull infant comes to a bad end"; and I am disposed to think that he was not very far from the truth.

It is in the Danielian additions to Servius' commentary<sup>1</sup> (if indeed they are additions, and not part of Servius' own notes), which have the merit of preserving the memory of many old Italian ideas and customs, that I have found what I believe to be the real clue to this mysterious allusion; it is a passage which I have already had reason to quote in my book on the *Roman Festivals* (p. 143 fol.), but without perceiving its full bearing upon Virgil's line: *Proinde nobilibus pueris editis in atrio domus Iunoni lectus, Herculi mensa ponebatur*.<sup>2</sup> I cannot say that I am quite clear as to the exact meaning

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Thilo and Hagen, vol. iii. p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Servius, ed. Thilo and Hagen, vol. iii. p. 53, note. The words are also found in Philargyrius and the Bernensian Scholia, and probably formed part of an ancient gloss, afterwards rejected for the more high-flown explanations to which I have alluded above. For

of these words, *e.g.* whether the commentator supposed that at the birth of a child *mensa* and *lectus* were spread for the two deities in each case, or whether, in a case of a boy's birth, Hercules alone had his table, while in the case of a girl's Juno alone had her *lectus* (in which sense it was understood by Scaliger); but I have little doubt that in the custom to which he is alluding, both deities were concerned at the birth of every child. For they were the *di coniugales*; they were the representatives in the old Roman religion of the male and female principles respectively: their combined influence had produced the child. We are now practically certain that the name Hercules became attached, we cannot tell how, to the Roman conception of *Genius*, and that the corresponding *numen* of women was called by the familiar name Juno. The names themselves are of no great account, as any one will understand who is conversant with the history of the Roman religion; the *numina*, the spirits affecting human life, had

the value of the Scholia first printed by Daniel in 1600, see Nettleship, *Essays in Latin Literature*, p. 339; Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Literature*, ii. 397.

often no names, or only acquired them in the course of time by strange processes, only too common in a land where both the form and the terminology of religion became a curious concrete of Greek, Etruscan, Sabine, and Latin elements. Now Juno and Hercules are found together both in Italian literature and art in ways that can leave no doubt as to their peculiar relation and character. A full account of these will be found in Roscher's *Mythological Lexicon*, vol. ii. pp. 2258 fol. (*s.v.* Hercules), compiled from the oral teaching as well as the writings of Reifferscheid of Breslau, who first discovered and published this curious feature of old Italian religious thought.<sup>1</sup>

I hope that scholars will now agree with me

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, I have been astonished to find that in his note on Catullus quoted already, Scaliger, with the habitual acuteness which he added to his learning, had cast to the winds the explanations from Greek mythology and adopted what is practically the one I have given. *Nascentibus putabant adesse, mari Genium, qui est Deus mensae, feminae Junonem, quae est dea cubilis. Qui, inquit, non risere ad parentes nec Genius illum accipit mensa nec Dea hanc cubili.* But Scaliger did not know the Danielian Servius' comment, or he would have quoted it; nor did he know Hercules = Genius: hence he thinks of Genius apparently only as the *numen* of the festive board.



that we have in these lines nothing more than an allusion, in the true Virgilian manner, to an old Roman or Italian practice, still at that time preserved in some aristocratic families, though already no doubt bereft of its original significance, and by no means clear to the mind of Virgil himself;<sup>1</sup> an allusion quite in keeping with the picture that the poet brings before us in these tender lines: *The child that will not smile on his mother is not worthy of notice from the deities presiding over his parent's union*—that is all. And we may now thus paraphrase the whole passage: “Begin, little one, to recognise thy mother with a smile: she deserves it of thee, for her travail has been long: begin, little one, for babes who do not thus own their mothers’ love, cannot expect the favour of her guardian deities.”

The passage thus explained, I can hardly believe that any one will still contend that the

<sup>1</sup> By Virgil's time, still more in that of Servius, the custom and its meaning may have been imperfectly understood, only surviving in the “nurse's saw,” as Mr Seaton calls it. It is impossible for us to recover them exactly, and unwise to press the words of poet or commentator too closely. But as to the *deus* and *dea* there should be no doubt.

child of the poem was not a real one. How could Virgil have used such language of an abstraction, or of a Greek god Dionysus? How could he have ventured on such an allusion? To my mind, at least, the lines are too real and tender to be applicable to any child but one definitely expected, and poetically conceived by the poet as born when the *carmen* comes to a close. The mother was a real mother, the child a real child. The latter is doubtless, as Professor Ramsay says, the representative of a new and better generation; but to be that in Roman eyes he must be, as every Roman scholar afterwards understood him to be, an individual infant of flesh and bone.

After expressing so strong a conviction that the *parvus puer* was a child actually born or expected to be born, I may fairly be called on to express an opinion as to who he was. On this question I do indeed hold a decided opinion, but more than an opinion it is not possible for any one to give, nor is it a vital matter, as far as the poem itself is concerned, whether or no the secret can be discovered. But I wish to draw attention in this connexion

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to one point which has not, I think, been sufficiently considered.

The earliest information we have about the question is contained in a note of Servius, which seems to come directly from the great Roman scholar Asconius, who 'lived and wrote a generation or two later than Virgil himself. Asconius was told by Asinius Gallus, son of Pollio, that he himself (Gallus) was the *parvus puer* of the Eclogue. *Asconius a Gallo audisse se refert hanc eclogam in honorem eius factam*.<sup>1</sup> Now the value of this information seems to me to consist, not in the statement of Asinius Gallus, which is open to grave suspicion, but in the implied fact that *the identity of the child was not known to Asconius*. Gallus, we may note, was a candidate for the Principate at the end of Augustus' reign, and actually thought of by him as a possible successor, though considered ambitious and unequal to the position.<sup>2</sup> When Tiberius succeeded, Gallus made himself for many years as unpleasant as he could

<sup>1</sup> This is also in the Danielian Servius *ad Ecl.* iv. 11, and in the Scholia Bernensia. Thilo. and Hagen's Servius, iii. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Tac. *Ann.* i. 13.

to that unlucky Emperor, whose wife Vipsania he had married after she had been divorced by order of Augustus; and it would suit both his purpose and temper to spread about such a story, especially if no one knew who the child of the poem really was. Clearly Asconius did not know, or Gallus would not have confided the secret to him; and if Asconius did not know, we may be sure that no one else knew, and may well wonder why the family of Pollio had kept the secret so long.

This story of Asconius and Gallus, with the fact that the child was to be born in Pollio's consulship, was in my opinion what gave rise to the tradition, which has more generally found favour than any other, that the child was a son of Pollio. This paper has been occupied with more important matters than the question whether Pollio had one or two sons born at this time, and whether either of them was born in the year of his consulship, and I have not now space to go into these details. But apart from the fact, if we may call it so, that Asconius knew nothing of the identification until Gallus told him of it, I find it impossible to read

this Eclogue, and to compare it with the language used of Pollio in the third, and still to accept the conclusion that the marvellous child was his son.<sup>1</sup> Pollio is in the Eclogues an ordinary human being, as he was to Horace and to every one else at the time; and neither his consulship nor the part he took in negotiating the peace of Brundisium could make him into anything more. Mr Sidgwick is hardly right in claiming that the consul in 40 B.C. still controlled the empire;<sup>2</sup> the great office had not yet recovered from the eclipse of its glory under Cæsar, and it is significant that at the close of this very year Pollio and his colleague had to resign their offices, and that one of their successors for the short remainder of the year was the useful political agent, Cornelius Balbus of Gades, whose

<sup>1</sup> *Ecl.* iii. 84-88. I may add that personally I can never get over the awkwardness, if not absurdity, of line 11 of our poem (*teque adeo decus hoc ævi, te consule, inibit*), if the child was Pollio's: conceive a poem addressed on the birth of his son to a President of the United States without any allusion to his fatherhood! But for the arguments adduced for the Pollionic hypothesis, see Cartault, pp. 229 fol.

<sup>2</sup> See the Introduction to his notes on this Eclogue, p. 18.

very *civitas* had been attacked in a Roman court of law but a few years earlier. I confess that I cannot think of the son even of Pollio the consul as *cara deum soboles, magni Iovis incrementum*. My own feeling—I will not say conviction—is that, if Virgil is to be interpreted by his own poems, the evidence *a priori* is overwhelming that the new age and the hopes of Italy could only be personified by him as a member of the family of the Cæsars. Pollio, Varus, Gallus are helpful human friends in these early poems, and then disappear; but Augustus is ever in Virgil's mind from the First Eclogue onwards, not merely as a human friend and helper, but as the son of the divine Julius, and as the pacificator and regenerator of the world. Well indeed might the child of such a man—a man himself not far from the gods—be hailed in the lofty language of our poem.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some excellent remark on Virgil's relation to Julius and Augustus will be found in H. Nettleship's *Ancient Lives of Virgil*, p. 39 fol. But I trust that readers of this paper will refresh their recollection of the following passages of our poet: *Ecl.* ix. 47 fol. (I do not mention the Fifth Eclogue, where the identification of Daphnis with Julius is uncertain); *Georg.* i. 24 fol., 466 fol., especially

This strong Virgilian evidence, which led my old teacher and friend, Henry Nettleship, to adopt the view that the child was the one which, in the year 40, Scribonia, the wife of Octavianus, was expected to bear, inclines me also in the same direction. I think it highly probable that Virgil wrote the poem before the birth, and put it aside when Octavianus was deceived in his hope of a son;<sup>1</sup> that he eventually published it with the other Eclogues, feeling, as a young poet might feel, that it was worthy of him and expressed some of his tenderest hopes for Italy—nay, that he had spent infinite pains to clothe his feeling in lofty verse, and drawn for his diction on a great variety of sources; and I believe that he intentionally left it wrapped in obscurity and surrounded by appropriate mystery. Its real object was to

line 500; *Georg.* ii. 170 fol.; *Aen.* i. 257 fol., vi. 788 fol., viii. 678 and 714 fol. The most striking of these is of course the famous one in *Aen.* vi., where Augustus, the golden age, and the regeneration of Italy are all brought together in glowing verse; the passage is discussed in this sense by Prof. Conway (pp. 39-42).

<sup>1</sup> The child actually born (in 39 B.C.) was a girl, the famous or rather infamous Julia, and Scribonia was divorced the same day (Dio Cass. xlviii. 34). The view expressed above has been stated with great force by

hail the coming Better Age rather than to salute the expected infant; and it might remain, as it has remained, a bone of contention for expositors. This is my own feeling about the matter; each of us will judge for himself according to his own historical and poetical feeling.

Let me end as I began, with a reference to Mr Mackail's remarks. I cannot agree with him that there is no mystery in the poem at all; but I am entirely at one with him in claiming that it should be treated essentially as a poem and not merely as a puzzle, and that it should be interpreted as far as possible by reference to the poet's own life and works. As a poem it should be learned by heart and meditated on *as a whole*, not merely put upon the dissecting-board as a *corpus vile* for criticism.

Professor Skutsch in his book *Aus Vergil's Frühzeit*, p. 148 fol. : *cp.* his *Gallus und Vergil*, 127 note, where he alludes to this essay as independent of his own conclusion. On p. 159 of the former work he points out that Martial wrote a poem (6.3) to celebrate the birth of a child of Domitian, and published it, though the child was never born.





## SOURCES OF THE FOURTH ECLOGUE

BY JOSEPH B. MAYOR

THE editors of Virgil seem content for the most part to regard this poem as merely a hyperbolical expression of the hope that the agreement made at Brundisium between Antony and Octavius in the year 40 B.C. might put an end to the civil strife from which Rome had so long suffered. The few who have made any attempt to account for the special features of the new era foretold by the poet have usually assumed without proof that these features were capable of explanation out of the commonplaces of Greek or Roman literature, there being, in their opinion, nothing to justify Merivale's assertion<sup>1</sup> that "the glowing language in which the reign of happiness is depicted appropriates almost every image, and breathes some portion of the spirit, of the Messianic predictions."

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the Empire*, vol. iii. p. 231.

I propose to consider in this paper how far it is true that parallels for these images are to be found in pagan literature, and, if they are not to be found, whether it is possible to trace them back to a Jewish origin; and I will begin with an examination of the line in which Virgil appears to disclose to his readers where he found his materials—

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas.

Two of the ancient scholiasts, followed by the learned Fabricius, in his *Bibliotheca Graeca*, vol. i. p. 181, and by J. Geffcken, the latest and in some respects the best editor of the *Oracula Sibyllina*, maintain that we have here an allusion to the Ages of men described in the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, whose father migrated from Cyme in Asia Minor to Boeotia, and who might therefore be himself styled Cumaeus. But is this a natural interpretation? Is there any other example of the epithet Cumaeus being applied to Hesiod? We should gather from Hesiod's own words (l. 650) that he was born after the removal to Boeotia, as he tells us that the crossing from Aulis to Eubœa was the

longest voyage he had ever made. In any case he wrote his poems at Ascra, near Mount Helicon, and is accordingly referred to by Virgil as "Ascraeus senex" (*Ecl.* vi. 70), by Propertius (iii. 32. 77) as "Ascraeus poeta," by Ovid (*Am.* i. 15. 11) as "Ascraeus" simply, while the phrase "Ascraeum carmen" is used as a synonym for pastoral poetry in general in *Georg.* ii. 176. On the other hand, Virgil's thoughts were much occupied with the Sibyl of the Italian Cumae, a city in the neighbourhood of which he resided for some years of his life,<sup>1</sup> and which is said to have been the oldest of the Greek colonies of Italy, founded jointly by the Eubœan Chalcis and the Aeolian Cyme. In the *Aeneid*, Æneas is twice bidden to consult this Sibyl, once by Helenus (*Aen.* iii. 441-460), and again by Anchises (*Aen.* v. 730-736), while the Sixth Book gives us the story of the actual visit to the Sibyl's grotto. So Ovid speaks of the "Virgo Cumaea" (*Met.* xiv. 135), of the "Cumaeae templa Sibyllae" (*Met.* xv. 712), of "Cumaeos annos," referring to the longevity of the Sibyl (*Ex Ponto*, ii. 8. 41);

<sup>1</sup> *G.* iv. 563.

so Valerius Flaccus of the "Cumaea vates" (i. 5), and Lucan of the "vates Cumana" (v. 183). I think, therefore, there can be little doubt that, in using the phrase "Cumaeum carmen," Virgil refers to the Sibyl, not to Hesiod.

Postponing for the present the enquiry how far Virgil may have been indebted to Hesiod for any part of his description of the golden age, we enter on the difficult question, What was the Sibylline song to which he here alludes as foretelling such an age, the world's crowning era of virtue and happiness? We can hardly suppose that it is the poet himself who is "rapt into future times" and utters his own visions under the mask of the Sibyl. More than any other of the great poets Virgil depends upon his predecessors. It would seem, therefore, that he must have had in his mind some distinct Sibylline utterance when he used the phrase "Cumaeum carmen."

The first thing which this phrase would suggest to any Roman would be the *Sibylline Books*, called also *Libri Fatales*, or simply *Libri*, which were believed to have been purchased by Tarquin and preserved with

scrupulous care, first by the *Duumviri*,<sup>1</sup> and finally by the *Quindecimviri*, until they were burnt in the conflagration of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in the Social War, B.C. 83. Constant references are made to these books in the pages of Livy. According to Dion. Hal. (*A. R.* iv. p. 792) they were consulted, upon the order of the Senate, in any serious trouble, whether of foreign war or civil discord, and also on the occurrence of any prodigy, to ascertain how the wrath of the gods was to be appeased. In accordance with this is Marquardt's statement (*Röm. Staatsverwaltung*, vol. iii. p. 43) that their purpose was not to reveal the future, but to provide counsel and help in calamities, where the ordinary rites were of no avail. These books came originally from the neighbourhood of Troas, and pointed to the help of gods who were either themselves foreign or to be worshipped after some foreign ritual. Their introduction, aided by the intercourse with the Greek colonies of southern Italy, brought into Rome the knowledge of various Graeco-Asiatic deities; and we are expressly

<sup>1</sup> For the origin of this form see Roby, *Introd. to Justinian*, p. ccxxi. Mommsen prefers the form *duoviri*.

told that the inauguration of the *Lectisternia* and *Supplicationes* was due to directions contained in the Sibylline Books (Liv. v. 13, vii. 27). As these books were only to be read by the official interpreters, the Quindecimviri,<sup>1</sup> upon the order of the Senate, and could not be promulgated, after being read, until the Senate had given their consent,<sup>2</sup> it is plain that very little could be known of their contents to the ordinary citizen beyond the ceremonial rules published from time to time, of which Livy gives so many examples;<sup>3</sup> rules which have certainly very little in common with Virgil's prophecy of the golden age.

If we turn, however, to the original home of these oracles in Asia Minor, they appear

<sup>1</sup> They seem to have had the assistance of two officials skilled in the use of the Greek language: see Alexandre, *Excursus ad Sibyllina*, vol. ii. p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> This is shown by the general disapproval of C. Cato's action, when, as tribune, he compelled the Quindecimviri, without the sanction of the Senate, to publish the Sibylline oracle as to the restoration of King Ptolemy with an armed force: see Cicero's letters to Lentulus (*ad Fam.* i. 1, 2, 5); Dio Cass. xxxix. 15. Justin (*Apol.* i. 44) states that those who read them (without permission, we may suppose) were liable to be put to death.

<sup>3</sup> A synopsis of these is given by Alexandre, *l.c.* pp. 198 foll.

in a different light in the famous saying of the great Ephesian philosopher, Heraclitus, towards the end of the sixth century (*i.e.* about the time of the expulsion of the Roman kings). In Fragment xii. of Bywater's edition we read the striking words—Σίβυλλα δὲ μαινομένῳ στόματι ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἐτέων ἐξικνέεται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν, "the Sibyl with frenzied lips uttering things unmirthful, unadorned and unperfumed, reaches by her voice through a thousand years by the will of the god."<sup>1</sup> Plato gives an equally lofty idea of the Sibyl in the *Phaedrus*, p. 244, where, after speaking of the many benefits public and private bestowed on man through the divine madness of the prophetess at Delphi and the priestess at Dodona, he

<sup>1</sup> The genitive is used with ἐξικνεῖσθαι by Xenophon, *Anab.* iii. 3, 7, οἱ ἀκοντισταὶ βραχύτερα ἡκόντιζον ἢ ὥς ἐξικνεῖσθαι τῶν σφενδονητῶν, "the range of the javelins was too short to reach the slingers." In other passages the word is better translated "to hit," "to cover." The meaning of Heraclitus would thus be "covers with her voice a thousand years," *i.e.* utters truth bearing on far distant ages. We may conjecture, however, from Ovid's "Cumaeos annos" quoted above, as well as from other references, that some understood them as attributing long life to the Sibyl herself, "attains a thousand years."



adds that it would take long to tell of the good wrought by the Sibyl and others ὅσοι μαντικῇ χρώμενοι ἐνθέω πολλὰ δὴ πολλοῖς προλέγοντες ἐπὶ τὸ μέλλον ὥρθωσαν.

What do we gather from these, the most ancient testimonies to the fame of the Sibyl?<sup>1</sup> In the first place, there is only one Sibyl. Later ages speak of four or ten, or even more, the number being increased partly through the rivalry of competing cities, partly perhaps through the influx of a new strain of prophecy, as in the case of the Jewish, the Babylonian, and the Egyptian Sibyls. The inspiration, according to both Heraclitus and Plato, is a literal possession, such as that of Cassandra and of the Cumaean Sibyl in the *Aeneid* (vi. 45-51, 77-80). The utterances themselves, according to Heraclitus, are limited to words of warning and of woe (ἀγέλαστα); they are harsh and uncouth, with no smooth flattering phrases (ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα); they foretell the distant future; and Plato adds that their effect has been to bring about reform in nations and individuals. There seems to be a special significance in "the voice sounding

<sup>1</sup> The Aristophanic parodies will come in for consideration later on.

on through a thousand years," for Ovid records the complaint of the Sibyl who has still to live three hundred years out of the destined thousand, during which she will continually dwindle away till nothing remains but a *voice* (*Met.* xiv. 143)—

Voce tamen noscar, vocem mihi fata relinquent.

Virgil, on the other hand, states that the oracles were usually written down on leaves,<sup>1</sup> which were liable to be scattered in disorder by the wind when the door of the cave was opened, and which, when once scattered, the Sibyl took no pains to rearrange. Hence those who apply to her for advice—

Inconsulti abeunt sedemque odere Sibyllae.

For this reason Helenus warns Æneas to implore the prophetess to utter the oracles with her lips, instead of writing them down (*Aen.* iii. 448-457). The disordered leaves were no doubt intended to signify the incoherence and the sudden transitions of the oracular books.

Far different from this is what Livy tells us of the *Libri Fatales*. It is of course possible

<sup>1</sup> See also Varro, quoted by Servius on *Aen.* iii. 444.

that the oracles known to Heraclitus may have included ritual matters, which were of little interest to him, but which had a special charm for the prosaic Romans; and the methods employed by the Quindecimviri may have been such as to leave large scope for the interpreters, like the *sortes* used in other Italian oracles.<sup>1</sup> But it is also quite possible that the visions of the future, which so much impressed Heraclitus, may have been too revolutionary for Roman conservatism; and for this and other reasons the Capitoline copy of the oracles may have differed from the Asiatic original both in the way of omission and addition.

Can we think of any class of writings which would agree better than the *Libri Fatales* (so far as we can conjecture their nature from the facts mentioned by Livy), with the hints dropped by Heraclitus? There are books

<sup>1</sup> So Virgil, where he makes Æneas promise the Sibyl that her oracles shall be held in high honour in Latium and be deposited in the temple of Apollo, uses the words (*Aen.* vi. 71)—

Te quoque magna manent regnis penetralia nostris :  
Hic ego namque tuas *sortes* arcanaque fata,  
Dicta meae genti, ponam, lectosque sacrabo,  
Alma, viros.

dating from a hundred years before his time, which speak of another *voice* "crying in the wilderness." The prophets, of whom they tell us, profess to speak in the name of God and under His inspiration. The larger part of their prophecies consists of threats of judgment. They deal with the fate of nations and of individuals reaching on to the end of time. They are often confused, apparently self-contradictory, difficult to understand, mixed up of blessing and cursing in an inexplicable way. Yet they have been signally successful in raising the moral standard both in nations and individuals. In one point they depart from the old type as described by Heraclitus. They appeal to hope as well as to fear; they hold out the prospect of a final reign of righteousness and peace. As to the style in which these books are written, in so far as the original Hebrew is concerned, they might be characterized in a good sense as ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα; but, if we think of later Greek translations, we should have to apply these words in the same depreciatory sense as that in which they seem to have been used by Heraclitus of the Sibylline verses current in his time.

The conquests of Alexander initiated a period of growing intercourse between Greeks and Jews. Before the end of the third century B.C. a large part of the Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and the Jews were beginning to interest themselves in the literature of Greece. In this literature nothing would be more likely to attract their attention than the Sibylline oracles, which, if we may judge from the earliest mention of them by Greek writers, had so many features in common with their own prophecies, and which offered them such a good opportunity of winning fresh proselytes by surreptitiously introducing to the Gentiles the religious ideas of the Hebrews. This work had been already commenced in the second century B.C. by the insertion of longer or shorter sections of Jewish history or prophecy into the acknowledged oracles, to which whole books were subsequently added by Jewish, and then by Christian forgers. In the words of Schürer (*Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Eng. tr., vol. iii. p. 276), "The collection as we have it is a chaotic wilderness. . . . Even the single books are some of them arbitrary aggregates of single fragments. . . . Every

reader and writer allowed himself to complete what existed after his own pleasure, and to arrange the scattered papers now in one, now in an opposite manner. Evidently much was at first circulated in detached portions, and the collection of these, afterwards made by some admirer, was a very accidental one. Hence duplicates of many portions are found in different places."

I return now to Rome and to the measures taken by the Roman Government to replace the *Libri Fatales* destroyed by fire in B.C. 83. After the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus by Sulla, the Senate, in B.C. 76, at the instigation of the Consul C. Curio, sent envoys to the different places which were supposed to possess collections of Sibylline writings, whether public or private; and, after careful sifting, about a thousand verses were deposited in the vaults of the restored temple.<sup>1</sup> It is evident from the writings of the time that there was a widespread interest

<sup>1</sup> A maioribus decretum erat post exustum sociali bello Capitolium, quaesitis Samo, Ilio, Erythris, per Africam etiam ac Siciliam et Italicas colonias carminibus Sibyllae, una seu plures fuere, datoque sacerdotibus negotio quantum humana ope potuissent vera discernere (Tac. *Ann.* vi. 12, cf. Lact. *Inst.* i. 6).

in this search for oracles, and in the question of their authenticity,<sup>1</sup> and fresh oracles were continually making their appearance down to the reign of Tiberius and later, many of which were manufactured to further political intrigues. Thus Lentulus, the conspirator, in 63 B.C. affirmed,<sup>2</sup> "ex falsis sibyllinis haruspicumque responsis, se esse tertium illum Cornelium, ad quem regnum huius urbis atque imperium venire esset necesse; Cinnam ante se et Sullam fuisse . . . fatalem hunc esse annum ad interitum huius urbis atque imperii, qui esset decimus annus post Virginum absolutionem, post Capitolii autem incensionem vicesimus." Similarly the authority of the Sibyl was invoked in support of the proposal to give the title of king to Julius Cæsar (Cic. *De Divin.* ii. 110). "Sibyllae versus observamus, quos illa furens fudisse dicitur; quorum interpres nuper falsa quadam hominum fama dicturus in Senatu putabatur, eum quem re vera Regem habebamus, appellandum quoque

<sup>1</sup> Varro (d. 28 B.C.) treated of the Sibylline Oracles in the fourth book of his *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, fragments of which are given in Merkel's edition of Ovid's *Fasti*, p. cxvi. foll.

<sup>2</sup> Cic. *Cat.* iii. 9.

Regem, si salvi esse vellemus. Hoc si est in libris, in quem hominem et in quod tempus est? Callide enim qui illa composuit perfecit, ut quodcunque accidisset praedictum videretur, hominum et temporum definitione sublata"; and a similar story is told by Suetonius (*Jul. Caesar*, 79): "Fama percrebuit . . . proximo senatu L. Cottam, quindecimvirum, sententiam dicturum, ut, quoniam libris fatalibus contineretur Parthos nisi a rege non posse vinci, Caesar rex appellaretur."

One method of distinguishing between true and false prophecies appears to have been the use of acrostics in the latter. Thus Cicero (*De Div.* ii. 111) argues that such an artificial form of composition is inconsistent with the divine frenzy ascribed to the Sibyl, and Varro is quoted to the same effect by Dion. Hal. (*A. R.* iv. 62), as saying that the spurious oracles may be detected by the so-called acrostics.<sup>1</sup>

The continued multiplication of books

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the use of acrostics may be derived from the Jews, as something resembling it is found in some of the Psalms and in the Book of Lamentations. It occurs, however, in the Prologues to the Plautine Comedies, written about 50 B.C. (see Teuffel's *Rom. Lit.* § 88. 2), and



claiming to be oracular is further shown by the action of Augustus in the year 12 B.C., when he succeeded Lepidus as Pontifex Maximus, and called in all the unauthorized oracles, whether Greek or Latin, which were in circulation. Suetonius tells us<sup>1</sup> that he destroyed upwards of two thousand volumes, retaining only a selection of the Sibylline books, which he moved from the Capitol and deposited in the vaults of his new temple of the Palatine Apollo, thus fulfilling, as Servius says, the promise made by Æneas to the Sibyl of Cumae (*Aen.* vi. 69 foll.). We learn from Dio Cassius (lvi. 17) that he required even these, since they were getting illegible from age, to be replaced by new copies, made by the priests with their own hands, in order that no one else might read them. As the existing copies had been placed in the Capitol only about sixty years before, it seems probable that this was merely a pretext for the omission of any passages

is said to have been used by Ennius (*Cic. Divin.* ii. 111). There is a famous example in *Orac. Sib.* viii. 217-250.

<sup>1</sup> *Oct.* 31. Quidquid fatidicorum librorum Graeci Latinique generis nullis vel parum idoneis auctoribus vulgo ferebatur, supra duo millia contracta undique cremavit.

which might be thought dangerous. For the same reason Tiberius, when excitement was caused, in reference to the feud between Piso and Germanicus, by the supposed discovery of an ancient prophecy of the Sibyl, declaring that in thrice three hundred years Rome was doomed to perish by internal strife, ordered a re-inspection and fresh sifting of the oracular books, καὶ τὰ μὲν ὡς οὐδενὸς ἄξια ἀπέκρινε, τὰ δὲ ἐνέκρινε (Dio Cass. lvii. 18).

I think we are now in a condition to answer with some confidence the question where Virgil found his "Cumaean carmen." (1) It was evidently impossible for him to have any knowledge of the old Roman books which perished in 83 B.C., some years before his birth. (2) There is no ground for supposing that, in the year 40 B.C., when he wrote this Eclogue, he could have had any knowledge of the books which replaced them in the restored temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. We have seen how strict were the conditions under which the *Libri Fatales* might be inspected. Even the keepers were not allowed to consult them, far less to publish their oracles, without the express order of

the Senate. (3) We have no reason for thinking that Virgil was acquainted with any collection of oracles preserved in Erythrae or elsewhere out of Italy. Cumae is the one place in Italy where one might expect to find such, and we learn from Pausanias (x. 12) that there were none there in his time (*χρησμῶν δὲ οἱ Κυμαῖοι τῆς γυναικὸς ταύτης οὐδένα εἶχον ἐπιδείξασθαι*). (4) We seem driven therefore to the conclusion that Virgil's "Cumaeum carmen" was either one of the many oracles which, having been imported from Asia Minor about the year 76 B.C., had not been thought worthy of admission to the Capitol, but were apparently still in circulation in Rome at the time when the Eclogue was written; or it may have been one of those which found their way to Rome between the years 76 and 40 B.C., a time in which Roman armies were so busily employed in Syria and Egypt.<sup>1</sup> (5) In either case it is

<sup>1</sup> Mr Warde Fowler writes: "Why should it not have been picked up in Alexandria, the chief workshop of Jewish Sibyllinists? When Tacitus (*Ann.* vi. 12) mentions Africa among the other places which yielded new *carmina*, he doubtless includes Egypt, or chiefly means Egypt. And there had been plenty of opportunity for Romans to pick up such verses in Egypt in Virgil's

probable that this *carmen* was of Jewish origin. No other people had such strong reasons for composing such oracles; no others could make them so interesting; no others had such opportunities of pushing the sale of them as the ubiquitous Jew. We may even indulge the fancy that the interest which Virgil had shown in the Sibylline poems may have led to his being consulted by Augustus and Maecenas in the selection of Oracles for the Palatine temple, which was dedicated in 27 B.C. It is true that Augustus did not succeed to the office of Pontifex Maximus till the death of Lepidus in 12 B.C., seven years after the death of Virgil, but he had taken a leading part in the restoration of the national religion ever young days. Roman soldiers were in Egypt for several years before Cæsar went there. We read of Gabiniani milites in Alexandria (Cæs. *Bell. Civ.* iii. 4). Moreover, Cæsar's soldiers were chiefly from Virgil's own country, Cisalpine Gaul, and they were with him in Alexandria for many months. Then Cleopatra and her suite came to Rome and stayed some time. Thus there was much connexion between Italy and Alexandria; and we probably underrate the facility with which such things as prophetic verses might get about among the learned and pseudo-learned alike. Further, the idea of the golden age was more likely to be to the front in Virgil's time than in 76 B.C., or at any rate more likely to attract attention."

since he became supreme by the battle of Actium; and Virgil (as we have seen) was aware of his intention to transfer the Sibylline Books to the Palatine, when he wrote the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid*. Possibly the actual Jewish source of his Eclogue may have found a place in the new *Libri Fatales*.

It may be well to notice here Forbiger's objection (see his edition of Virg. vol. i. p. 63) to the idea that a Roman poet could have condescended to borrow from a Jewish writing. "Quis vero scriptorum Latinorum superstitiones Judaicas, nisi illas deridere vellet, adsciscere vel tractare dignatus est"? In the first place, it is not necessary to suppose that Virgil was aware of the Jewish origin of the Sibylline oracle which he follows. It may have professed to come from Erythrae, or Egypt, or from the East generally, like the prophecy afterwards applied to Vespasian.<sup>1</sup> In the next place the tender-hearted and widely sympathetic Virgil was just as little likely to share the hard Roman contempt for the Jew, as he was to share the bitter prejudice against Carthage. If he could take the Carthaginian Queen for his heroine, if

<sup>1</sup> Suet., *Vesp.* 4.

in her story he dared to reverse the old ideas of Roman and of Punic faith, why should we suppose him to be less sensitive than was Longinus afterwards<sup>1</sup> to the sublimity of the sacred books of the Hebrews? Besides, we have plenty of evidence to show that, in this time of the breaking up of old faiths, more than one Eastern religion exercised an extraordinary attraction in Rome.

If we suppose, then, that such a vision as we have in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah had been made the subject of a Sibylline poem, are there any allusions in the Fourth Eclogue which would correspond with and might be explained by this?

We will take first the general idea of a golden age still to come. So far as Greeks or Romans in general knew or dreamt of a golden age, it belonged to the infancy of the world, corresponding to the Garden of Eden among the Hebrews. Hesiod,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Sublim.* ix. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Opera*, 109.—Goettling thinks that Hesiod looked forward to an improvement after the iron age, because he utters the wish that he might either have died before it, or been born afterwards; but there is nothing to support such an interpretation, and it is better to take the words as Paley does, as merely expressive of strong dislike

Aratus,<sup>1</sup> Ovid,<sup>2</sup> all start with this, descending to their own generation by a gradual decline from golden to silver, from silver to brazen, from brazen to iron, except that Hesiod interpolates an age of Heroes between the brazen and the iron. Still more plainly is this principle of degeneration expressed by Horace (*Carm.* iii. 6. 45)—

Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?  
Aetas parentum peior avis tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore;

and by Juvenal (xiii. 28)—

Nona aetas oritur peioraque saecula ferri  
Temporibus, quorum sceleri non invenit ipsa  
Nomen et a nullo posuit natura metallo.

But, it may be asked, may not this imagination of a golden age in the future be derived from the Stoic doctrine of the periodic renewal of the world, a *παλιγγενεσία* or *ἀποκατάστασις* <sup>3</sup>

—"better any age than this." Paley even holds that vv. 180-201 are descriptive of a sixth and still more degenerate age.

<sup>1</sup> *Phaenomena*, 110 foll. Aratus omits the iron age.

<sup>2</sup> *Metam.* i. 89 foll.

<sup>3</sup> For these words compare Varro *ap. Aug. Civ. Dei.* xxii. 28, Sext. Emp. *adv. Math.* v. 105, Anton. xi. 1. Both terms were borrowed by Christian writers, see Acts iii. 21, Matt. xix. 28.

at the end of the cosmic year, the *magnus annus* of Virgil? This very phrase, as well as the belief in the recurrence of the past, described in the lines which follow—

Alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo  
Delectos heroas ; erunt etiam altera bella,  
Atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles,

leave no doubt that Virgil was familiar with the teaching of the Stoics on this point.

It is true that the “*magnus annus*” was originally an astronomical conception, not confined to the Stoics, but shared by all men of science. As the solar year was complete when the sun returned to his original position in the heavens, so we are told that, “*cum ad idem, unde semel profecta sunt cuncta astra redierint, eandemque totius caeli discriptionem longis intervallis rettulerint,—(then the great year is completed), tum ille vere vertens annus appellari potest, in quo vix dicere audeo quam multa hominum saecula teneantur*” (Cic. *De Republica*, vi. 22).<sup>1</sup> The Stoics connected this with their doctrine of the periodical conflagration of the universe, and also with their astrological views. Since the life of man was

<sup>1</sup> See the passages quoted in my note on Cic. *N. D.* ii. 51, and Zeller, *Die Phil. d. Griechen*, vol. iv. p. 154.



determined by the aspect and influence of the stars, when the stars returned to their original position, there must be a recurrence of human history.<sup>1</sup>

But though Virgil adds to his sketch of the golden age some colours from the Stoic natural philosophy, he says not a word of the most important part of it, viz. the universal conflagration which precedes the new world, and the hopeless outlook of predestined decline which follows after each cosmic renovation,—that thought which called forth Shelley's famous protest—

Cease ; drain not to its dregs the urn  
Of bitter prophecy.  
The world is weary of the past,  
Oh ! might it die, or rest at last.

Here then we find one main feature of Virgil's vision, a feature which is alien to

<sup>1</sup> See Origen *c. Cels.* v. 20 : φασί δὲ οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοιᾶς κατὰ περίοδον ἐκπύρωσιν τοῦ παντὸς γινεσθαι, καὶ ἐξῆς αὐτῇ διακόσμησιν πάντ' ἀπαράλλακτα ἔχουσιν ὡς πρὸς τὴν προτέραν διακόσμησιν . . . καὶ Σωκράτην μὲν πάλιν Σωφρονίσκου υἱὸν καὶ Ἀθηναίῳ ἔσεσθαι . . . καὶ Ἄνυτος δὲ καὶ Μέλητος ἀναστήσονται πάλιν Σωκράτους κατήγοροι. So Servius on *Ecl.* iv. 4 : "Quod s est idem siderum motus, necesse est ut omnia quae fuerunt habeant iterationem. Universa enim ex astrorum motu pendere manifestum est."

Greek and Roman thought, but which pervades and dominates the whole literature of the Hebrews: *Man's true perfection lies in front of him, not behind him.*

A second remarkable feature is that this perfect state is to be brought about by the birth of a wonderful child.

Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.  
Aggredere O magnos, aderit iam tempus, honores,  
Cara deum suboles, magnum Iovis incrementum.

The exact force of the last line has been much disputed. Munro has an important note on it in the *Journal of Classical and Sacred Philology*, iv. 290 fol., in which he says that it is usually taken to mean "Dear offspring of gods, great fosterling of Jupiter," but he contends that "offspring of gods" is here unmeaning, as the "father, whoever he was, whether Pollio, as I think, or another, was a living, mortal man"; and he would therefore give to *suboles* its other sense of "breed" or "stock," understanding the phrase of "a child with the nature and qualities which gods have." Later critics, as is shown in the preceding Essays, have generally come to the conclusion that the child referred to

is the hoped-for child of Augustus and Scribonia; and as Augustus and Julius, and indeed the whole Julian race are regarded as divine<sup>1</sup> by Virgil, there is no reason why the expected infant might not be called "cara deum suboles," the affectionate word "cara" being especially suited to the child of the poet's great benefactor, Augustus. But though Munro does not seem to me to have proved his point in regard to *suboles*, I think he is right in translating *Iovis incrementum*, "promise of a Jove to be." He even doubts whether *incrementum* can ever mean "child," and points out that it is sometimes "used with a genitive to denote the first rudiments, germs, beginnings of something which is afterwards to grow up." He compares Ovid, *Met.* iii. 102 (probably imitated from this passage) "iubet supponere terrae

<sup>1</sup> See *Eclog.* i. 6, 7.      Deus nobis haec otia fecit.

Namque erit ille mihi semper deus, illius aram  
Saepe tener nostris ab ovilibus imbuet agnus.

(v. 56.)      Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi  
Sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.

(v. 65.)      Deus, deus ille, Menalca!  
Sis bonus, O felixque tuis! en quattuor aras:  
Ecce duas tibi Daphni, duas altaria Phaebo.

(ix. 47.)      Ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum.

(*Aen.* vi. 835.)      Tu parce, genus qui ducis Olympo.

vipereos dentes *populi incrementa futuri*, where he understands the words in italics to mean "the germs or seeds which are to be developed into a future people." He supports this by Apul. *Met.* v. 28, where "Venus in a great passion says of Cupid, nimirum *incrementum istud* lenam me putavit, meaning apparently something like *that little abortion*"; and by a passage in Q. Curtius, v. 6.42 : Idem Amyntas adduxerat quinquaginta principum Macedoniae liberos adultos ad custodiam corporis. Quippe inter epulas hi sunt regis ministri, idemque equos ineunti praelium admovent venantemque comitantur et vigilarum vices ante cubiculi fores servant, magnorumque praefectorum et ducum haec<sup>1</sup> incrementa sunt et rudimenta, "These youths are the first beginnings and rudiments, have in them the making of great governors and commanders." Munro adds in reference to the application of the line to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for the attraction of the pronoun Cic. *Phil.* v. 14 : Pompeio patre, quod imperio populi Romani lumen fuit, extincto, interfectus est patris simillimus filius. Mützell, in his note on the passage from Curtius, gives what I think a truer explanation : "Diese Geschäfte und Verrichtungen konnten gleichsam als Bildungsmittel für die künftigen Herrführer angesehen werden."

the Tyndaridae in the *Ciris*, 398: "With what meaning, if indeed with any meaning at all, the author of the *Ciris* in its present form has introduced his parody, I am quite unable to say."<sup>1</sup>

Nettleship questions Munro's interpretation on the ground that "the thought would be extravagant, expressing flattery which Virgil does not bestow elsewhere, even on Augustus,"<sup>2</sup> and I think all must agree that to speak of the new-born child as "the promise of a Jupiter to be" is a very startling phrase, something quite unexampled in classical literature. Not unexampled, however, in Jewish literature, for we read in Isaiah ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son

<sup>1</sup> See below, Appendix on *Incrementum*. Professor Skutsch in his *Gallus und Vergil* gives strong reasons for thinking that the *Ciris* was written by Virgil's friend and patron Gallus, and that the phrase in our Eclogue was borrowed from him. Skutsch notes that the spondaic hexameter is characteristic of Gallus, who uses it fifteen times in the 541 lines of the *Ciris*, while it occurs only three times in the 850 lines of the Eclogues.

<sup>2</sup> Skutsch (*Aus Vergil's Frühzeit*, p. 152) goes so far as to speak of its "Enormität." Cartault's explanation, "Jupiter sera grandi par la naissance d'un tel enfant" seems to me a poor equivalent to the weighty expression "Iovis incrementum," as interpreted by the context in Virgil.

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is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,<sup>1</sup> Prince of Peace"; and again in chap. vii. 14 "the<sup>2</sup> virgin (or damsel) shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, God with us" (cf. viii. 8). See also Jer. xxiii. 5, 6: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as king; . . . and this is his name by which he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." What Virgil in his own person would not have dared to say, Virgil, the interpreter of the Sibyl's song (that is, as we have seen, of Jewish prophecy), no more shrinks from writing than Tennyson shrinks from the phrase "Ring in the Christ that is to be," both looking forward to a higher and purer order, a deeper sense of religion, about to establish itself in the world.

But while we are bound, as I think, to recognise the influence of Jewish writers in

<sup>1</sup> This is very inadequately rendered in the LXX.: *καὶ καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἀγγελος· ἄξω γὰρ εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀρχοντας καὶ ὑγίαιαν αὐτοῖς*, omitting the two clauses which might cause offence.

<sup>2</sup> Does the article refer to the promised "seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15)?

this phrase of Virgil's, we are not thereby precluded from recognising in it the social and religious influences of his own time and country. We cannot forget that the highest ideal of the Stoics was embodied in the shape of a human or half-human champion of right, who, as Horace tells us (*C.* iii. 3, 9), was believed to have attained to divinity by his self-sacrificing labours in behalf of humanity.

Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules  
Enisus arces attigit igneas,  
Quos inter Augustus recumbens  
Purpureo bibit ore nectar.

Even ordinary mortals were honoured as Lares of the family after their death, and the Greek kings of Egypt received divine honours during their lifetime. Nor was the astounding thought of another Jupiter to replace the present ruler of the gods, as he had replaced his father, one altogether unfamiliar to those who knew the story of Prometheus, and of the fateful marriage of Thetis, described by Catullus in a poem which was certainly in the mind of Virgil when he wrote this Eclogue. I do not, of course, mean that Virgil took such stories

literally, but he may have regarded them as typifying the advent of a new and higher manifestation of Divinity, an exhibition of wisdom and righteousness, above all, of a compassion for mankind, unknown in the hard rule of the past.

Another feature of this birth, which is found alike in Virgil and Isaiah, is that it is immediately impending. According to Virgil it is to take place in this very year, the year of Pollio's consulship; according to Isaiah vii. 14 the child is shortly to be born; in ix. 6 he is already born; in vii. 16 and viii. 4 reference is made to his growing intelligence; in xi. the glory of his kingdom is described. In both writers the question as to the identity of the child is left in vagueness, and is therefore variously answered by interpreters. In the Fourth Eclogue he has been identified as one of the sons of Pollio, either Saloninus or Asinius Gallus, or as Marcellus, the son of Octavia and nephew and subsequently son-in-law of Augustus (but this is inconsistent with the fact that he was born three years before the consulship of Pollio), or as the expected offspring of Scribonia, or finally as the type and repre-



sentative of the rising generation, which was destined to witness the coming of the golden age. So in Isaiah the child has been regarded as either the son of the prophet himself (cf. viii. 3), or as Hezekiah, son of Ahaz (but this seems inconsistent with chronology), or as a miraculous virgin-birth of the time, or finally (according to the view which has always prevailed among Christians, and which does not necessarily exclude any one of the preceding narrower references), as representing the Messianic hope of the future, foreshortened in the prophet's vision, and therefore destined to immediate disappointment (as Virgil's hope was disappointed in the Julia of history), but receiving its full accomplishment when the appointed time came round.<sup>1</sup> Where there is a fervent

<sup>1</sup> This is the view of the commentators of every school. Thus Cheyne on Isa. ix. 6 says: "The prophet is designedly vague; we are told nothing about the origin of the Messiah; it is only an inference that he was expected to come from the Davidic family. Isaiah is entirely absorbed in his wonderful character and achievements. He conceives of the Messiah somewhat as the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians regarded their kings, as an earthly representative of divinity." Bp. Wordsworth, on Isa. vii. 14, after quoting from Bacon's *Adv. of Learning*, "Divine

aspiration after better things, springing from a strong feeling of human brotherhood, and a firm belief in the goodness and righteousness of God, such aspiration carries with it an invincible confidence that some how, some where, some when, it must receive its complete fulfilment, for it is prompted by the Spirit which fills and orders the universe throughout its whole development. But if the human organ of inspiration goes on to fix the when, the how, and the where, and attributes to some nearer object the glory of the final blessedness, then it inevitably falls

prophecies have springing and germinant accomplishments throughout many years, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age," goes on to say that the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the child of the prophet and prophetess, and the routing of the two foes of Ahaz soon after that birth, were a pledge and earnest of the future accomplishment of the prophecy in the birth of Messiah. Rawlinson, on the same text, explains the words "The virgin shall conceive," as meaning that before a newly conceived infant should grow up to years of discretion, the enemies of Judah would be destroyed; and that this child may have received from his pious mother the name Immanuel in witness of her faith that, whatever dangers threatened Israel, God was still with His people." Prof. E. Johnson, in the *Pulpit Commentary*, says that no more is known about any youth to whom the prophecy could refer than about the boy of the Fourth Eclogue.

into such mistakes as Virgil's, and finds its golden age in the rule of the Cæsars (which was indeed an essential factor in the triumph of Christianity), or perhaps, as in later days, in the establishment of socialism or imperialism. Well for the seer if, like Virgil and Isaiah, he remembers that the kingdom of God is within us, and that the true golden age must have its foundation in penitence for past misdoing, and be built up in righteousness and loving-kindness.

Still another feature common to both writers is the connexion between the years of the child's life and the fortunes of the world around. Virgil tells us of the circumstances which attend his infancy (v. 18), his youth (v. 26), his manhood (v. 37), and he denotes the stage of youth by the remarkable expression

At simul heroum laudes et facta parentis  
Iam legere et *quae sit poteris cognoscere virtus*,

a phrase which corresponds closely with Isaiah's words twice repeated, "Before the child shall *know to refuse the evil and choose the good*, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken" (vii. 16), and "Before the child *shall have knowledge to*

*cry*, My father and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away" (viii. 4). Indeed Virgil himself repeats the latter words in the line

Incipe parve puer risu *cognoscere matrem*.

We go on now to consider the other details of the new age depicted by Virgil, and, if possible, to find out where they are taken from. It is not necessary to fix on some one authority to the exclusion of all others, nor need we expect to find perfect consistency. Virgil is a poet, writing at the most critical epoch of human history, with a heart and mind open to all influences; and in this poem he embodies the half-conscious hopes and forebodings of his time. The Sibyl was never supposed to be logical, and Virgil here makes no attempt to reconcile the rival claims of Apollo, Saturn and Jupiter, who are all named as presiding over the new age.

I take first the phrase "*ultima Cumaei carminis aetas*." Servius, in his note on *Ecl.* ix. 47,<sup>1</sup> quotes the Memoirs of Augustus

<sup>1</sup> Vulcatius haruspex in contione dixit cometem esse

to the effect that the soothsayer Vulcatius had interpreted the appearance of the comet at the funeral games held in honour of Cæsar, as denoting the end of the ninth age and the beginning of the tenth. Plutarch (*Vita Sullae*, 7), speaking of the signs which foreboded the rise of Sulla, mentions in particular the piercing and terror-striking sound of a trumpet which came from a clear sky, and was understood to announce the end of the eighth stage of the great year. Censorinus (*De Die Natali*, 17) adds that the Etruscan soothsayers believed that, when the tenth stage was completed, there would be an end of the Etruscan name. Servius in his note on this line, says that, according to the Sibyl, the last age is the tenth, the age of the Sun or Apollo. In the existing Sibylline books (*e.g.* iv. 20, 47, viii. 199) the tenth age is also mentioned as the concluding age of the world's history. In the Old Testament the age of the Messiah has no number attached to it (except in the book

qui significaret exitum noni saeculi et ingressum decimi sed quod invitis dis secreta rerum pronuntiaret, statim se esse moriturum; et nondum finita oratione in ipsa contione concidit. Hoc etiam Augustus in libro secundo de memoria vitae suae complexus est.

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of Daniel), but it is constantly spoken of as the "last time," as in Isaiah ii. 2.

1. 4. "*Iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.*" Compare *Aen.* vi. 791 foll. :

Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,  
Augustus Caesar, Divi genus, aurea condet  
Saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva  
Saturno quondam.

There is no doubt that "Virgo" here is to be explained by *Georg.* ii. 474 :

Extrema per illos  
Iustitia excedens terris vestigia fecit ;

and by Seneca, *Octavia*, 423 :

Astraea virgo siderum magnum decus.

Justice driven from earth by the wickedness of man was enshrined in heaven as the constellation Virgo. The story is borrowed from Aratus (*Phaen.* 96-136), by whom it was expanded from Hesiod (*Op.* 200). It is just possible, however, that Virgil may have identified the Hesiodic figure with the "virgin" of Jewish prophecy as concerned in the coming epoch. The happy reign of the Latin god Saturnus was commemorated in the Saturnalia, the festival

of equality and peace. In later times he was identified with the Greek god Kronos, who was believed to have held supreme authority in the golden age (Hes. *Op.* 111), and also to preside over the dead Heroes in the Isles of the Blest (*ibid.* 169; Pindar, *Olymp.* ii. 123 foll.). Virgil combines the two in *Aen.* viii. 319:

Primus ab aethereo venit Saturnus Olympo  
Arma Iovis fugiens et regnis exul adeptis.

See also *Georg.* i. 125, ii. 536.

1. 7. "*Iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.*" We may compare with this and the tenth line some words from the third and oldest book of the existing Sibylline Oracles (l. 652):

καὶ τὸν ἀπ' ἡελίοιο Θεὸς πέμψει βασιλῆα  
ὃς πᾶσαν γαίαν παύσει πολέμοιο κακοῖο.

It must be confessed, however, that the Sibyl here, like her predecessor of the sixth century, still prefers to dwell on the sadder side of life, ἀγέλαστα φθεγγομένη.

"*Tuus iam regnat Apollo.*" We have already seen (p. 122) that—according to the Sibyl—Apollo, brother of Diana, here

identified with Lucina, was to preside over the tenth age. Another feature of the golden age is the recovery of pristine innocence, denoted by the return of the virgin Astraea, and expressly declared in ll. 13, 14—

Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,  
Inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

Hesiod does not actually mention the virtue of the first men, but it stands out by contrast with the corruption of their successors. On the other hand, in Jewish prophecy righteousness is the most prominent note of the final reign of blessedness. Virgil's meaning here is much the same as in *Georg.* i. 500, where he prays that the young Augustus may be permitted "eversio succurrere saeclo . . . ubi fas versum atque nefas, tot bella per orbem, tam multae scelerum facies."

1. 15. "*Ille deum vitam accipiet divisque videbit Permixtos heroas*," taken from Hesiod (*Op.* 112): ὥστε θεοὶ δ' ἔξωον ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες. Compare Aratus, *Phaen.* 102 (of Astraea):

ἦρχετο δ' ἀνθρώπων κατεναντίη· οὐδέποτ' ἀνδρῶν,  
οὐδέποτ' ἀρχαίων ἡγήνατο φύλα γυναικῶν κ.τ.λ.



Catullus, lxiv. 385 foll. :

Praesentes namque ante domos invisere castas  
Saepius et sese mortali ostendere coetu  
Caelicolae nondum sprete pietate solebant,

and the story of Baucis and Philemon.<sup>1</sup> It was also in accordance with Jewish belief, as shown in Isaiah's use of the name Immanuel, and in Exodus xxix. 45, Leviticus xxvi. 11, 12.

ll. 18, 19. "*Nulla munuscula cultu tellus . . . fundet.*" So Hesiod (l. 117): *καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ξείδωρος ἄρουρα αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον*. The same idea is repeated in lines 29 and 30, and with far more grandeur in Isaiah xxxv. 1: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," *ibid.* lv. 13: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree." Compare also *Sib. Orac.* iii. 743-759:<sup>2</sup>

Γῇ γὰρ παγγενέτειρα βροτοῖς δώσει τὸν ἄριστον  
καρπὸν ἀπειρέσιον σίτου οἴνου καὶ ἐλαιόν,  
αὐτὰρ ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν μέλιτος γλυκεροῦ ποτὸν ἡδύ  
δένδρεά τ' ἀκροδρύων καρπὸν καὶ πίονα μῆλα

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 64 note.

<sup>2</sup> This is generally assigned to the second century B.C.

καὶ βόας, ἐκ τ'οἶων ἄρνας αἰγῶν τε χιμαῖρας·  
 πηγὰς τε ῥήξει γλυκερὰς λευκοῖο γάλακτος·  
 πλήρεις δ' αὖτε πόλεις ἀγαθῶν καὶ πίονες ἀγροί  
 ἔσσοντ'· οὐδέ μάχαιρα κατὰ χθονός οὐδὲ κυδοιμός·  
 οὐδὲ βαρὺ στενάχοντα σαλεύσεται οὐκέτι γαῖα·  
 οὐ πόλεμος, οὐδ' αὖτε κατὰ χθονὸς αὐχμὸς ἐτ' ἔσται,  
 οὐ λυγρὸς καρπῶν τε κακορρέκτειρα χάλαζα·  
 ἀλλὰ μὲν εἰρήνη μεγάλη κατὰ γαίαν ἅπασαν· κ.τ.λ.

1. 22. "*Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.*"  
 The same idea is repeated in *Ecl.* v. 60.  
 There is no parallel in Hesiod, but in  
Isaiah xi. 6 we read, "The wolf shall dwell  
 with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down  
 with the kid, and the calf and the young lion  
 and the fatling together, and a little child shall  
 lead them. . . . They shall not hurt nor  
 destroy in all my holy mountain," which is  
 nearly reproduced in *Sib. Or.* iii. 787-794.

Ἐν σοὶ δ' οἰκήσει, σοὶ δ' ἔσσεται ἀθάνατον φῶς·  
 ἡδὲ λύκοι τε καὶ ἄρνες ἐν οὐρεσιν ἄμμιγ' ἔδονται  
 χόρτον, παρδάλιές τ' ἐρίφοις ἅμα βοσκήσονται·  
 ἄρκτοι σὺν μόσχοις νομάδες αὐλισθήσονται·  
 σαρκοβόρος τε λέων φάγεται ἄχυρον παρὰ φάτνην  
 ὡς βοῦς· καὶ παῖδες μάλα νήπιοι ἐν δεσμοῖσιν  
 ἄξουσιν· πηρὸν γὰρ ἐπὶ χθονὶ θῆρα ποιήσει·  
 σὺν βρέφειν τε δράκοντες ἅμ' ἄσπίσι κοιμήσονται,  
 κοῦκ ἀδικήσουσιν· χεὶρ γὰρ θεοῦ ἔσσετ' ἐπ' αὐτούς.

1. 24. "*Occidet et serpens et fallax herba*

*veneni.*" This again is not Hesiodic, but resembles Isaiah xi. 8, "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den." In *Georg. i.* 129 the same thought recurs; after the dethronement of Saturn, Jupiter "*malum virus serpentibus addidit atris.*"

1. 30. "*Durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella*" This is named among the rewards of the righteous in Hes. (*Op.* 230), and in *Sib. Ora* (iii. 745). So Canaan is a land flowing with milk and honey.

11. 38 foll. "*Cedet et ipse mari vector.*" In this and the following lines we have a curious feature of the new age. Navigation, agriculture, the life of towns, the arts of civilization generally, are spoken of as marks of a falling away from the primæval perfection the restoration of which is described as the hope of humanity. No scope seems to be left for human effort and skill. There is no more place for commerce, since "*omnis feret omnia tellus*" the dyer's hand is idle, since wool of every colour is produced by nature. Compare *Hor. C. i.* 3. 20-24 and the contrast between

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the reign of Saturn and Jupiter in *Georg.* i.  
125 foll., especially

Mellaque decussit foliis ignemque removit,  
Et passim rivis currentia vina repressit,  
Ut varias usus meditando excuderet artes.

This part of the Eclogue is an elaboration  
of Hesiod (*Op.* 236)—

θάλλουσιν δ' ἀγαθοῖσι διαμπερές· οὐδ' ἐπὶ νηῶν  
νίσσονται, καρπὸν δὲ φέρει ζείδωρος ἀρουρα.

We may also compare it with the "Sabbath rest" of Israel, the promised peace which is to mark the reign of the Messiah (Isa. ix. 7). There are, moreover, occasional suggestions to be found in Hebrew writings which denote a high esteem for a life of Arcadian simplicity, such as the ascription of inventions to the fallen angels (Enoch vii., viii.) and to the descendants of Cain (Gen. iv. 20), and again the disappearance of the sea from the new heaven and earth (Rev. xxi. 1).

1. 36. "*Iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles.*" It has been shown above that this is taken from the Stoic doctrine of the ἀποκατάστασις. It may also have been suggested by Hesiod's interpolation of the Heroic age, with its battles and adventures, in his

picture of the four world-ages, possibly also by Jewish pictures of the Millennium, which was to be followed by a fresh outbreak of the powers of evil; or it may merely reflect the sudden transitions from good to evil in the visions of Isaiah and the other prophets. The interruption to the triumph of good in any case merely a passing phenomenon, whether we are intended to see in it the last struggle of evil, or a necessary part of the training of the Conqueror<sup>1</sup> for the high office to which he is appointed by

Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae,

a line which reads like a protest on the part of the poet against the sad never-ending round of which the Stoics dreamt.

ll. 50-52. "*Aspice, venturo laetantur ut omni saeclo,*" cf. *Ecl.* v. 61 foll. A not unworthy echo of such passages as Isaiah xliv. 2: "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and will glorify Himself in Israel"; see also xlix. 13, lii. 9, lv. 1:

<sup>1</sup> Compare above, p. 19.

I think the above comparison between Virgil and Isaiah naturally leads us to the conclusion that the thoughts and expressions of the prophet must have somehow filtered through to the poet; and the poet's own confession leads us to the Sibyl as the actual organ or medium of communication reaching through 500 years. But such a view is not without its own difficulties. The Eclogue is in some respects nearer to the original prophecy than to the subsequent paraphrase, so far as that is to be found in the still extant Sibylline Oracles. We must remember, however, that these extant oracles contain only an infinitesimal portion of the oracles existing in the time of Virgil. The great mass of our Sibylline books are of Christian origin, retaining no doubt something of the character of the older books, whether Jewish or Pagan: and we are probably justified in supposing that the existing books owe their form and preservation to the feeling of Judaistic Christians, who valued them as the voice of prophecy among the Gentiles, confirming the prophets of Israel<sup>1</sup> by confuting the errors of polytheism and idolatry, and setting forth

<sup>1</sup> See Augustine quoted in the footnote on p. 24.

the terrible punishments in store for unbelievers. The bitterness engendered by persecution solaced itself by imaginations of the still heavier woes stored up by righteous vengeance for the persecutors. This, I think, will account for the prevailing tone both of the Sibylline passages cited by the Father and of the body of Sibylline writings which have come down to us, though the parallels which I have quoted above show that the future happiness in store for the righteous was not left entirely unnoticed. I think, however, that a careful examination of Virgil's Eclogues suggests that he must have had before him, if not an actual translation from Isaiah, at least some closer paraphrase of Messianic prophecy than we now possess.

Another interesting question is how Heracles could have spoken so highly of the Sibylline Oracles of his time. Judging from the parodies in Aristophanes,<sup>1</sup> as well as from what are regarded as the most ancient of the extant oracles, we should hardly have

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Eg.* 61 : ἀδει δὲ χρησμούς· ὁ δὲ γέγωνε σιβυλλικός. The oracles given in ll. 1015, 1030, 1037, etc., are generally ascribed to Bacis, but we may suppose them to represent the Sibylline type. Compare also *Pax* 100. See Alexandre, p. 140 foll.

thought they could have deserved the encomiums passed on them by him and by Plato.

It may help to explain this high appreciation, if we call to mind the words of Simmias in the *Phaedo* (p. 85 *d*), where, discussing the question of the immortality of the soul, he says it is man's duty to find the best and most irrefragable of human words, and trusting himself to this, as to a raft, to set forth on the hazardous voyage of life, unless it were possible to find a surer and less dangerous way on board a stronger vessel, some word of God (εἰ μὴ τις δύναιτο ἀσφαλέστερον καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον ἐπὶ βεβαιότερου ὀχήματος, λόγου θείου τινός, διαπορευθῆναι). So, at a later period, Porphyry justified the publication of his treatise on the "Philosophy to be derived from Oracles," on the ground that the use of such a collection of the divine responses would be understood by all who had felt the painful craving after truth, and had sometimes wished that, by receiving the manifestation of it from the gods, they might be relieved from their doubts by information not to be disputed (ὅσοι περὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὠδίναντες ἤξαντό ποτε τῆς ἐκ θεῶν ἐπιφανείας



τυχόντες ἀνάπασιν λαβεῖν τῆς ἀπορίας διὰ τῶν λεγόντων ἀξιόπιστον διδασκαλίαν.)<sup>1</sup> If we suppose something of this feeling in Heraclitus and Virgil, it would make it easier to understand the interest they took in the Sibylli Oracles.

On the other hand, nothing could be more appropriate than the words of the Ephesian philosopher, if they were meant to describe, say, the last prophecy of Balaam, or the first five chapters, or any of the "Burden" of Isaiah. Can we conceive any way in which these could have come to the knowledge of an Ephesian of 510 B.C.? We know that Psammetichus had encouraged the residence of Ionians in Egypt, and surrounded himself with a bodyguard of Greeks about the middle of the seventh century. He and his successors, Necho and Psammuth, were engaged in wars in Syria and Palestine and we read of Jewish settlements being established in Egypt during their reign (Jer. xlv. 1). Amasis (B.C. 569-525) was even a warmer philhellene than his predecessors, and received the honour of a visit from Solon. It was perfectly possible, the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *Præp. Evang.* iv. 7.

fore, for Greeks and Jews to fraternise in Egypt, and a native of Ephesus might thus bring back with him from Egypt some knowledge of Jewish prophecy, or a Greek soldier might get hold of some sacred scroll in an invasion of Judaea. Possibly future exploration in the tombs of Egypt may supply definite information on these points.<sup>1</sup> Another channel of communication between the Ionians and the Jews may be found in the sale of Jewish children as slaves to the sons of Javan by the Phoenicians (Joel iii. 6). Ephesians, no less than Syrians, might learn from "a little maid" the existence of prophets in Israel. So we find Isaiah speaking (xi. 11) of the return of Jewish exiles, not only from Assyria and Egypt, but also from the islands or coastlands of the sea. And even as early as the time of Solomon, Israelites took part in the mercantile expeditions of the Tyrians.

We may well believe that not Jewish exiles only but philosophers and statesmen of

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written my attention has been called to the recent discovery of the Assuan Papyri, which supply interesting information as to the interior of one of these Jewish colonies in the fifth century B.C. (cf. *J. of Theol. Studies*, vol. viii. 615 foll.).

Ionia would read with interest the announcement in the latest oracle from the East,<sup>1</sup> that the conqueror of Croesus was also the destined instrument in the hand of God for the deliverance of the nations from the yoke of Babylon and the restoration of the Jews to their native land.

But how are we to account for the use of the name Σίβυλλα by Heraclitus in connexion with Jewish prophecy. Perhaps the note of Servius on *Aen.* iii. 445 may help us here. Discussing the etymology of the word, he says, "Aeoli σίου dicunt deo βουλῇ autem est sententia: ergo Σιβύλλα quasi σίου (θεοῦ) βουλὰς dixerunt"; see Alexandre (pp. 1, 2), where this etymology is accepted and defended.<sup>2</sup> If the wo

<sup>1</sup> See *Isa.* xlv. 28, xlv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Baunack, *Studien auf dem Gebiete der griechisch und arischen Sprachen*, i. p. 64, upholds the same etymology. [It must be confessed that the phonetic conditions of this etymology are scarcely defensible from our present knowledge of the phonetics of any one Greek dialect. When did the θ become σ, or the ο δ appear? Such a contraction would be far more natural for Italian, than for Hellenic lips. On the other hand, foreign names suffer many things which are grievous to the student of the regular phonetic changes of a single language. No one can yet say precisely where and when it was that Πολυδεύκης became *Pollux*, Ὀδυσσεύς

σῖβυλλα meant originally the "counsel or will of God," we can see how it might be used for the utterance not only of the Greek prophetess, but also of the Jewish prophet declaring that will.

*P.S.*—To those who desire further information on this abstruse and interesting subject I would especially recommend Alexandre's exhaustive *Excursus ad Sibyllina*, containing 624 pages (unfortunately without an index), which constitutes the second volume of his first edition of the *Oracula*; and next to that, Klausen's *Æneas und die Penaten*, pp. 203-312; Marquardt's *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, vol. iii. pp. 42-54 and 336-344; Schürer's *History of the Jewish People*, div. ii. vol. iii. pp. 270-292, containing a full bibliography; and Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la Divination*, vol. ii. 93-199. See, too, Hastings' *D. of B.* vol. v. p. 66 foll. under "Sibylline Oracles." It may be worth while to compare the old edition of the Sibylline Books

*Ulixes*, Φερρέφαττα Περσεφόνη and *Proserpina*. And it must be remembered that a Sybil or witch is wont to be a foreigner; see a notice of Wünsch's *Sethianische Verfluchungstafel* in *Class. Rev.*, 1899, p. 226. R. S. C.]

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by Gallaeus (A.D. 1689) which is followed by an Appendix containing a collection by Opsopœus of other ancient Oracles.

## APPENDIX

### ON INCREMENTUM

MUNRO'S translation is confirmed by an inscription in *Corp. Inscript.* vol. x. par. 1, pp. 580, 581, *ex quorum reditu quotannis daretur pueris, curiae incrementis, crustulum*, which I suppose means "boys who would hereafter constitute (or 'compose') the Town Council," on which Mommsen notes *Decurionum filii ipsi dicuntur incrementum curiae*. Georges in his *Lexicon* gives the same meaning to *crementum* in two passages of Isidorus. On the other hand, there is a sepulchral inscription (Orelli 2685, Wilmanns 269), in which "incrementum" is interpreted "puer vel alumnus": *Niceratus . . . coniugibus fecit et sibi et Ulpio Vitali et Donato servo fidelissimo et Atteianis Succesae et Primitivae et duobus incrementis Victori et Chrysomello*, where *Atteianis* is explained to mean "formerly slaves of Atteius." See also the Vulgate (Num. xxxii. 14), speaking of the children of the generation which had perished in the wilderness, *et ecce inquit, vos surrexistis, pro patribus vestris, incrementa et alumni hominum peccatorum, ut augetis furorem Domini contra Israel*, where both A. V. and

R. V. have "an increase of sinful men," but Delitzsch explains "increase" as equivalent to "brood." Tillemont (*Mem. Eccles.* iv. p. 740) considers the use of *incrementum* in the sense of son, a proof of the late date of the *Acta S. Sebastiani*. [Partly taken from Marini's note on the *Atti dei Fratelli Arvali*, p. 425 foll.]

Professor Robinson Ellis, whom I consulted on this passage, illustrates it from *Aen.* x. 641 fol. : *Macte nova virtute puer: sic itur ad astra, Dis genite et geniture deos.* He thinks the nearest English equivalent to *incrementum* is "embryo." The child is begotten by Jupiter (*dis genite*) and is also the parent stock of gods (*geniture deos*). In the *Ciris* he understands the word in the former sense, meaning little more than "child." Skutsch (*l.c.* p. 82), on the other hand, gives the following explanation: *Incrementum* mit *suboles* durchaus nicht identisch ist. Geboren sind die Dioskuren als Söhne des Zeus: zum *incrementum* des Zeus, d. h. seiner Schaar ("an accession to his court"), der Götter, werden sie erst durch das *alternas sortiti vivere sortes* — sie steigen erst nachträglich zum Olymp auf. So kann ich zwar die Feinheit bewundern mit der Vergil den Vers auf das Menschenkind, den Göttersohn und künftigen Gott übertragen hat." That is to say, *incrementum* keeps its prospective force (like *semen* in *semen ecclesiae*) in both passages, as contrasted with the retrospective force of *suboles*.

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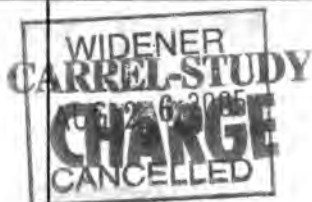
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